WHEN GENOCIDE WASN'T NEWS

How Canadian media covered up the destruction of Gaza

Edited by Martin Lukacs,
Dania Majid, Jason Toney

WHEN GENOCIDE WASN'T NEWS

How Canadian media covered up the destruction of Gaza

Edited by Martin Lukacs.

Dania Majid, Jason Toney

WHEN GENOCIDE WASN'T NEWS

How Canadian media covered up the destruction of Gaza

Edited by Martin Lukacs,
Dania Majid, Jason Toney

When Genocide Wasn't News: How Canadian Media Covered Up the Destruction of Gaza

Copyright © Breach Books, 2025

Published by Breach Books
403-2110 Rue Mackay,
Montreal, Quebec H3G 2J1
https://breachmedia.ca/
books@breachmedia.ca

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means electronic or mechanical including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system–without written permission from the publisher, or, in the case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a license from the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency, Access Copyright, with the exception of brief passages quoted by a reviewer in a newspaper or magazine.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: When Genocide Wasn't News: How Canadian Media
Covered Up the Destruction of Gaza / edited by Martin Lukacs, Dania Majid, Jason Toney.
Names: Lukacs, Martin, 1984- editor. | Majid, Dania, editor. | Toney, Jason, 1993- editor.
Description: Includes bibliographical references.
Identifiers: Canadiana 20250217228 | ISBN 9781069357830 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Israel-Hamas War, 2023-—Press coverage—Canada. | LCSH: Israeli-Palestinian conflict—1993-—Press coverage—Canada. | LCSH: Gaza Strip—History—Bombardment, 2023-—Press coverage—Canada. | LCSH: Genocide—Gaza Strip. | LCSH: Palestinian Arabs—Gaza Strip—Social conditions.
Classification: LCC DS119.771.W44 2025 | DDC 070.4/4995694055—dc23

Cover design: Andira Hernandez-Ramdwar
Cover Image: Anas Mohammed / Shutterstock.com
Copy editing: Donya Ziaee, Jason Toney, Tannara Yelland
Printed and bound in Canada by Imprimerie Gauvin

Ordering information:
LPG Distribution Collective Ltd.
502-234 Eglinton Ave. E.
Toronto, ON, M4P 1K5
1-800-591-6250
orders@litdistco.ca

Breach Books

To Palestinian journalists under siege

Contents

Introduction

Martin Lukacs, Jason Toney, and Dania Majid

Part One: Anti-Palestinian Bias

1. **Palestinian Deaths Count for Less in Canada's Newspapers. Data Proves It**

   Martin Lukacs, Katia Lo Innes, and Ben Cuthbert

2. **CBC Says Killing of Palestinians Doesn't Merit Terms 'Murderous,' 'Brutal'**

   Emma Paling

3. **Canadian Newsrooms Are Stifling Palestinian Perspectives**

   Shenaz Kermalli

4. **Globe and Mail Censored Criticism of Israel by Award-Winning Indian Author**

   Martin Lukacs

Part Two: The Fight Inside Newsrooms

5. **CBC Has Whitewashed Israel's Crimes in Gaza. I Saw It Firsthand**
   Molly Schumann

6. **Fighting for Fair Coverage of Palestine**
   Zahraa Al-Akhrass

7. **Why I Left CTV News: The Fight for Press Freedom in Canada**
   Iman Kassam

8. **Covering Palestine Shouldn't Cost Anyone Their Job. Or Their Life.**
   Pacinthe Mattar

9. **An Open Letter to Canadian Newsrooms on Covering Israel-Palestine**

Part Three: Silencing Palestinian Narratives

10. **Urgently Needed—A 'Palestinian-Montrealer'!**
    Muhannad Ayyash

11. **Why the Term 'Anti-Palestinian Racism' Has an Uphill Climb to Recognition**
    Shree Paradkar

12. **What Happened Outside Mount Sinai Hospital as a Pro-Palestine Rally Passed By?**
    David Gray-Donald

13. **Attacks on Press Freedoms Have Chilling Effects Far Beyond Gaza**
Sonya Fatah and Asmaa Malik

Part Four: The Pressure Tactics of the Israel Lobby

14. **Investigation: Journalists Denounce Pressure from the Pro-Israel Group HonestReporting Canada**
Loubna Chlaikhy

15. **Postmedia Called Out for Publishing Israeli Propaganda as 'News'**
Jeremy Appel

16. **In 'Covert Op,' Israeli Consulate Backed Poll Inflating Support for Gaza War**
Emma Paling and Martin Lukacs

Part Five: Voices from Palestine

17. **Report from the Frontline of Israel's War of Annihilation**
Hossam Shabat

Part Six: Advocating for Change

18. **Palestine Media Advocacy Toolkit**
Jason Toney and Anthony Issa

Contributors

Acknowledgements

Notes

Introduction

Since October 7, 2023, two wars have unfolded in Gaza. The first is Israel's one-sided destruction of the tiny strip of densely-populated Palestinian land. The other is the battle over how that story is told. This battle—so important to shaping perceptions of Gaza's fortunes, and the actions that might be taken to prevent an even more unimaginable fate—has played out in the media of countries like Canada.

Those who've followed on their social media feeds, turned to media abroad, or read reports from small Canadian independent outlets have borne witness to the daily horrors of the world's first livestreamed genocide: endless body bags, starving or limbless children, and entire cities reduced to dust. But Canada's powerful and well-resourced establishment media have amplified a very different sort of picture. In keeping with a pattern of decades of distortion, they spun a web of deceit: casting slaughter as self-defence, presenting makeshift weapons as a match for tanks and jets, and transforming Palestinians desperate for peace into a people lusting for blood.

Anyone who relied on this establishment media would scarcely have grasped what was transpiring in Gaza. In the wake of attacks by Hamas militants that killed approximately 1,100 Israelis[1], Israel seized an opportunity to launch a ferocious military offensive. As demands for the destruction of Gaza echoed across the Israeli political spectrum, officials began advocating to forcibly expel Palestinians and seize their land, or

annihilate its people entirely.[2] Israel then set out to make Gaza uninhabitable. The attacks escalated to astonishing proportions: at the time of writing, in June 2025, more than 55,000 people have been killed,[3] nine in 10 homes have been destroyed or damaged, Gaza's healthcare infrastructure has been "completely obliterated."[4] Israel also engaged in the unprecedented murder of more than 200 Palestinian journalists, amid almost total silence from media organizations in the West.[5]

By systematically destroying the basis for life in Gaza while herding its population into unliveable camps along its southern border, Israel aimed to force civilians to flee.[6] When Egypt refused to open borders, Israel effectively continued course with its onslaught. In March of 2025, Israel broke a short-lived ceasefire and imposed a total blockade on Gaza. "We are demolishing more and more houses, they have nowhere to go back to," Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu said in May. "The only obvious outcome will be Gazans wishing to emigrate out of the Strip. Our main problem is finding receptive countries."[7] A few days later, he followed up: "We will take over Gaza and maintain security control forever," he said. "A decision has been made to go all the way."[8] One can only describe all of this as "deliberate and systematic killing or persecution" intended to "partially or wholly destroy" the people of Gaza—the textbook definition of genocide.

As the articles and essays collected here document, what Canada's establishment media produced was not coverage of a genocide—it was a cover-up. Their reporting has removed the historical evidence from the crime scene, continuing a long practice of shearing the proper context: nearly 60 years of Israeli military occupation, the relentless theft of West Bank and East Jerusalem, and a system of apartheid cementing a subjugated existence for Palestinians. As this latest and greatest crime of all unfolded, the elite media dehumanized Palestinians, sanitized Israeli violence, and privileged pro-war voices. Canadians were meant to draw an intended lesson: genocide wasn't news.

The journalists and advocates in this anthology insisted that it was, exposing how our establishment media aided and abetted this crime. The problems they critique are systemic: a structural feature of how corporate

media and our public broadcaster report on a Canadian ally like Israel. Some of the journalists working within those newsrooms write about how they nevertheless tried to challenge that trend—and were subjected to pressures to conform, their contracts were not renewed, or were disciplined or fired. Others focused on tracking, in empirically-irrefutable ways, the establishment media's pervasive anti-Palestinian racism and bias. Still others focused on directly challenging those outlets to make marginal improvements in their reporting. This collection of writing is a record of a period of great moral stain on Canada's elite media.

***

The overwhelming slant of Canada's elite media reporting has structurally reflected the interests of Canada's government and corporate class, which are among Israel's strongest backers in the world. They sell Israel weapons. They give them diplomatic protection at the United Nations. And they offer them special trade access.

The special relationship is probably best summed up by what former Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin said in 2005: "Israel's values are Canada's values."[9] They are, indeed—the shared values of settler-colonial states. Both governments continue to clear the land of Indigenous peoples to make way for settlers and their projects. Both have imposed and entrenched that land theft with police or military violence. Both sign one-sided treaties to normalize this inequality on the ground. And representatives of both sometimes engage in tearful public acts of contrition—but don't stop committing their crimes.

Canada's policies toward Israel have also been fundamentally driven by the United States, for whom Israel has been an extremely useful client state, serving its geopolitical aims to maintain control of Middle East oil and keep Arab nationalism in check. In the 1950s, the U.S. wanted to sell fighter jets to Israel, but were worried about their support being visible, so Canada sold it for them instead. Over the following decades, Canada voted so often with

Israel at the UN that it developed a reputation as its “second friend” after the U.S.[10]

In more recent decades, Canada’s economic and military ties with Israel have grown even closer. They inked a free trade agreement that recognized Palestinian territory as de facto part of Israel. Billions in trade ensued. Canadian companies have built the Israeli Air Force’s communications system and highways used by Israeli settlers that are off-limits to Palestinians, creating what Israeli human rights group B’Tselem calls a “regime of apartheid.” Canada has poured tens of millions into a corrupt Palestinian Authority, including helping train security forces who have managed the occupation on Israel’s behalf.

Oil, weapons, and tech corporations, as well as other industries highly integrated with the state, set the parameters for our foreign policy in the Middle East and elsewhere. Israel lobby organizations exert influence on policy or media coverage to the extent that they align with this elite consensus. Pushing on an open door, they police deviations from that consensus by building around it a climate of hostile opinion. That foreign policy has been rationalized by anti-Palestinian racism, an insidious form of anti-Arab racism that Dania Majid, one of the co-editors of this anthology, has been at the forefront of analyzing and popularizing.

This broad state, corporate, and intellectual backing of Israel sets the framework of debate and discussion in Canada’s establishment media. As essays in this anthology evocatively illustrate, Israeli state actions are thus often justified and sanitized, while those of Palestinians are blamed and vilified. Despite decades of U.S.-backed Israeli rejectionism of peace initiatives, it is Palestinians who are depicted as terrorists set on war. And despite a widely-documented record of lying about their operations, the Israeli military continues being treated as a trustworthy source—the media constantly cast doubt on the Palestinian Health Ministry’s tally of deaths, even though those numbers were quietly accepted by Israeli government.

Double standards, one will notice reading through this anthology, are rampant. Consider the widely repeated media refrain about Israel’s right to defend itself in the wake of October 7, 2023—a framing that lent them

enormous license to engage in their brutal military offensive. International law does not grant the right of self-defence to an occupying power when those attacks come from within the occupied territory.[11] (Israel had withdrawn from its settlements in Gaza in 2005, but maintained control over the Strip's land, air, and sea, making it an occupying power according to the UN and International Court of Justice.[12])

By contrast, consider how Canadian media covered an episode with comparable human casualties. In December 2008, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead, which involved bombing Gaza for three weeks. It wasn't a war, or even asymmetric warfare: it was a one-sided massacre. There were 1,400 Palestinian killed, while 13 Israelis were also killed. Was the Canadian media at that time full of calls about a Palestinian right to self-defence? There was not a single such instance. It was outside the bounds of the expressible in Canada's establishment media. Palestinians were not accorded the right to self-defence, even though in international law, they are granted the right to resist occupation by targeting the military of the occupying power. In Canada's elite media, this right is accorded to ourselves and our allies—but never our victims.[13]

Explanations and interpretations convenient to the interests of Canada's political elite were applied not just to the Middle East, but to events at home. As a solidarity movement and later student encampments grew, they were often depicted as hotbeds of hate. And when an Indigo bookstore in Toronto was postered, the headlines in the media were more or less unanimous. Global News: "Toronto Indigo store splashed with red paint, posters attacking Jewish founder." CTV ran with "'Vile antisemitic attack:' Police investigating graffiti targeting Indigo CEO outside downtown Toronto store." Even Jesse Brown of Canadaland tweeted that "A Jewish-owned bookstore was vandalized."[14]

The coverage left uncontextualized how Indigo's CEO Heather Reisman had been targeted for years in campaigns by anti-war groups, including Jewish ones. Reisman has supported the Israeli military through a foundation that financially assists lone soldiers who served in the Israel Defence Forces. And when activists who were alleged to have postered

Indigo were arrested in draconian night-time police raids—the kind typically reserved for armed gangs—the media followed up by uncritically amplifying false accusations that they had been involved in “hate crimes.” This kind of coverage was the flipside of the establishment coverage of Gaza: while Canadian media helped enable and justify Israeli war crimes across the ocean, it also helped enable and justify the criminalization of those trying to bring an end to those crimes here.

***

Such examples underline the importance and urgency of progressive media criticism of the sort represented in this anthology. For too long, it is right-wing and conservative commentators that have monopolized such criticism in Canada, especially of CBC, swaying our understanding of the public broadcaster by perpetuating the notion that it is a bastion of “liberal bias” and goading its coverage further rightward.

The power of the establishment media to shape perception and debate is never absolute, always contested—perhaps now more than ever. The last several years have seen a flourishing of new or revitalized independent media outlets in Canada, many of whose reporting is featured in the following pages. Despite far fewer resources, they have often led the way in breaking important stories, shining a light on the structural biases of their establishment counterparts, and giving fair treatment of the Palestinian solidarity movement. Their continued growth—in support, funding, and audiences—will be crucial.

Progressive voices have often also found a home on social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. While these platforms are controlled by mega-corporations, regulated by algorithms stacked in favour of right-wing content, filled with information that is still mostly filtered from the establishment media, they have nevertheless become a place where new audiences can be reached with raw and graphic portrayals of the realities of Israel’s war on Gaza.

Nor is the establishment media's power absolute in resisting pressures to shift their coverage. Journalists have increasingly organized to challenge the culture within newsrooms, questioning old, bankrupt notions like "objectivity" or the idea that lived experience of an oppression is an impediment rather than a strength. Independent media coverage has added pressure, creating openings for journalists to push through stories they might not otherwise be able to. Meanwhile, a few principled voices on Israel and Palestine have carved out space for themselves in the establishment media.

While journalists trying to buck the trends of coverage in their newsrooms have had to contend with institutional pressures, as well as coordinated pressure from organizations like HonestReporting Canada, we now have projects to counterbalance their factually-dubious and often sexist and racist campaigns. The Media Accountability program of the Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East has forced corrections and created new positive pressures on establishment media.

The most important counterweight of all to the prevailing tendencies of the establishment media are popular movements. Media institutions are always affected by broader changes in consciousness and awareness brought on by movement activism, which impacts media managers, editors, and journalists. Beyond the coverage of Israel and Palestine, consider the reckoning with Canada's own colonial history underway, including in the pages of the establishment media, thanks entirely to an Indigenous rights movement that has forced changes in understanding.

The incredible uprising for Palestinian liberation within Canada has already had a marked impact on media coverage, even if the most visible changes will take time and remain limited by the entrenched structure and priorities of large media corporations. The hostile blowback that the movement for Palestinian liberation is experiencing from Canada's elite is already an indication of its effect—and a sign that, if it continues to grow and mobilize and educate, it will usher in even more dramatic changes.

It is a testament to this movement, as well as the journalism represented in this book, that a poll in June 2025 found that half of Canadians now

believe Israel is committing a genocide in Gaza.[15] Even if our establishment media ensured this genocide wasn't news, the truth has become impossible to suppress.

Anti-Palestinian Bias

1

Palestinian Deaths Count for Less in Canada's Newspapers. Data Proves It

By Martin Lukacs, Katia Lo Innes, and Ben Cuthbert, *The Breach*

December 22, 2023

The largest Canadian newspapers have given disproportionate attention to the deaths of Israelis, portrayed Israelis in more humanized ways, characterized their deaths as more worthy of indignation, and more often identified who was responsible for killing them, a comprehensive comparison of reporting on the deaths of Israelis and Palestinians reveals.

The Breach analyzed thousands of sentences in coverage in *The Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, and *National Post* from Oct. 7 to Nov. 24, 2023. The study found that dozens of Palestinian deaths were required to merit just one mention in the newspapers, while there was one mention of Israeli deaths for every two Israelis who died.

The study shows a pattern of anti-Palestinian bias in Canada's establishment media, sanitizing political violence against Palestinians and unequally stirring emotions about Israeli deaths.

Despite the unprecedented scale of Israeli bombing that has killed 20,000 Palestinians,[1] the majority of them women and children, the newspapers have never used emotionally evocative terms like "massacre" or "slaughter" to describe their deaths. Meanwhile, they regularly used

those terms to describe the Hamas attack on Israelis on Oct. 7, when militants killed more than 1,100 people.[2]

The newspapers were far more likely to assign responsibility for deaths to Hamas militants than to the Israeli military, writing that Palestinians were "hit by strikes" or "under blockade," or that "thousands of missiles" had been "fired at Gaza," while Hamas militants usually "killed" specific numbers of people.

Even as the Israeli military's bombing and invasion of Gaza has turned into a one-sided blood bath, which United Nations experts have described as a "genocide in the making,"[3] the newspapers mentioned Palestinian and Israeli deaths in similar numbers, and in some cases, mentions of Israeli deaths have exceeded those of Palestinian ones.

This systematic bias in political framing, assigning responsibility, and sentence construction is a journalistic trickle-down effect of the media mobilizing support for government and corporate interests in Canada, which have long backed belligerent Israeli state policies toward the Palestinians.[4]

Worthy and unworthy victims

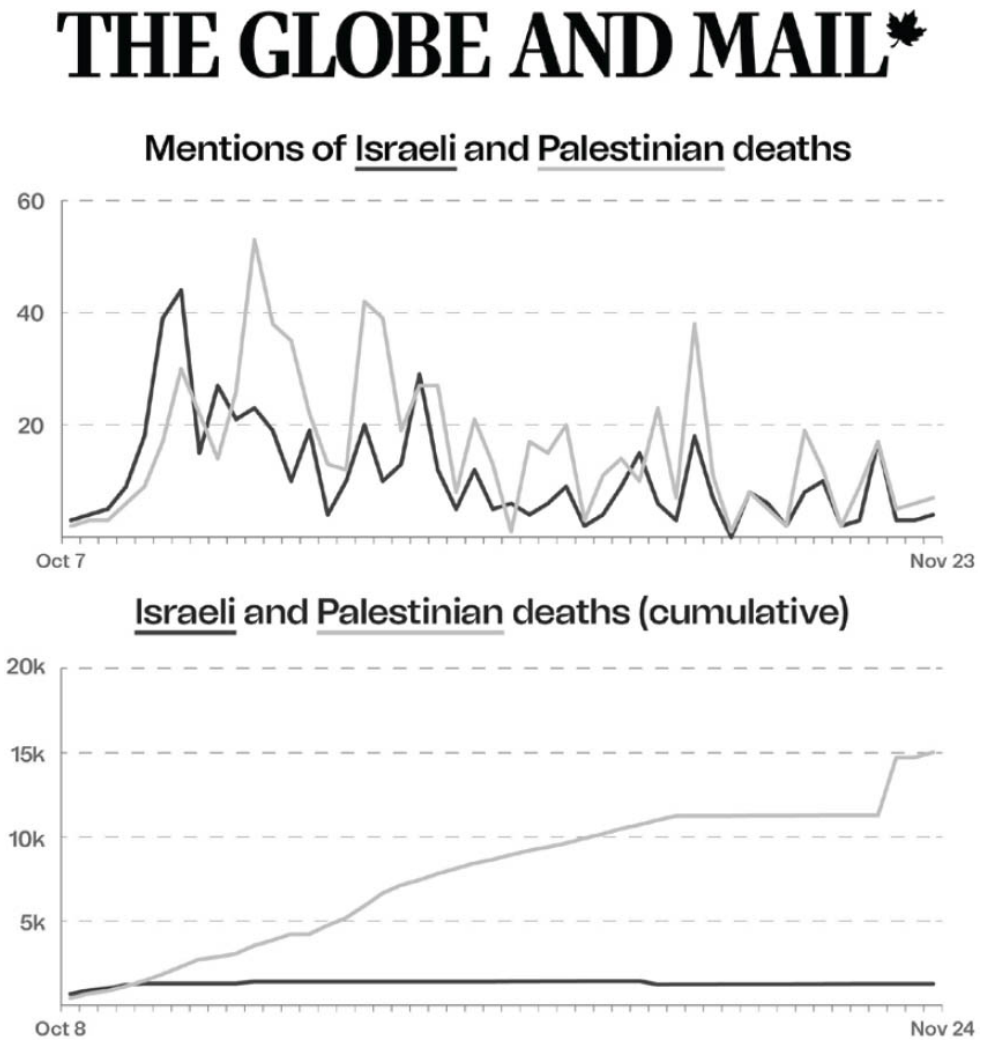
Over the first seven weeks of the war, *National Post* consistently mentioned Israeli deaths more often than Palestinian deaths.

Their coverage of Israeli deaths even increased in November, as Palestinians were dying in enormous numbers and Israeli deaths had long plateaued.

The Globe and *Toronto Star* mentioned Palestinian deaths more in absolute terms, but their mentions remained out of proportion to the actual and skyrocketing Palestinian death toll. The data speak to just one aspect of the biased coverage of Israel's war on Gaza.

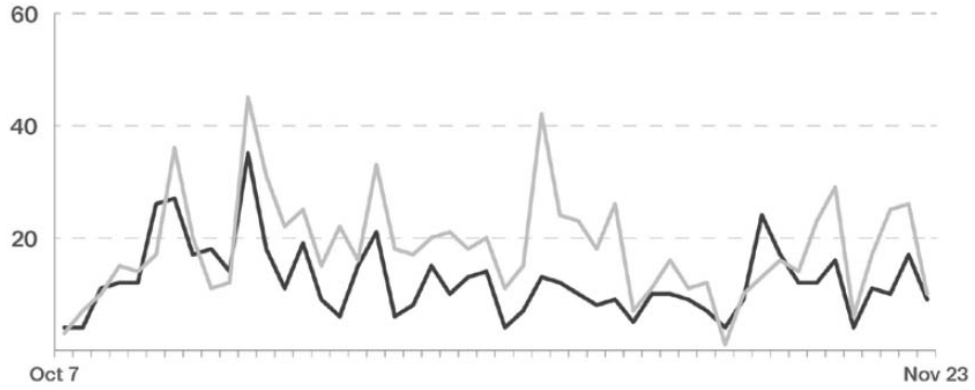
They illuminate what media theorists Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky suggest in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the*

Mass Media are the differences in volume and quality of media attention given to “worthy” versus “unworthy” victims of violence and war.[5]

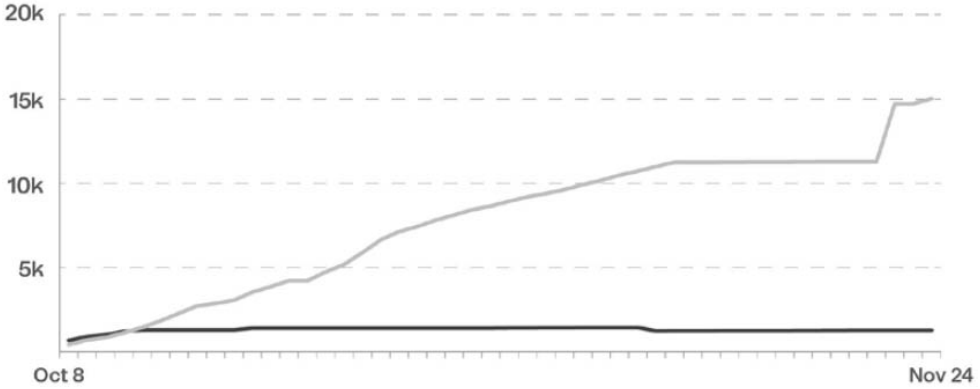


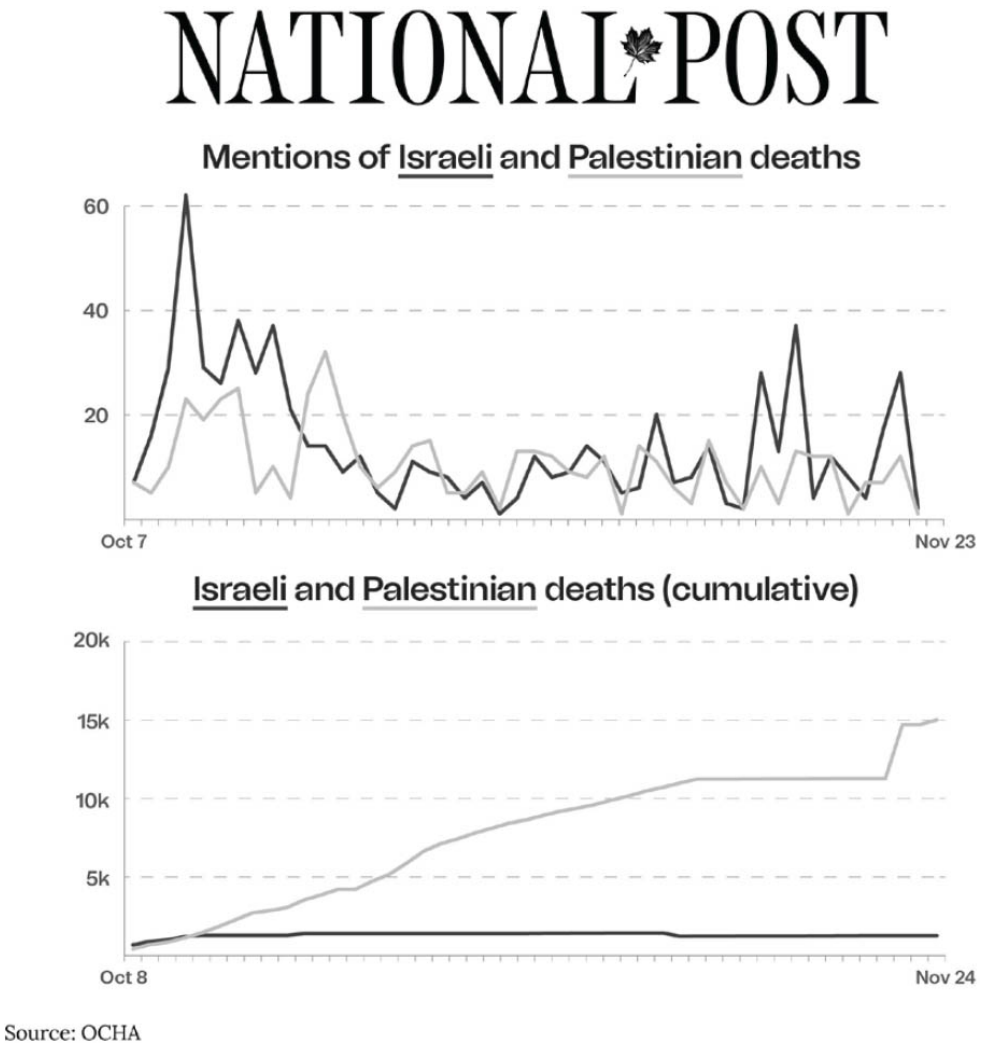
TORONTO STAR

Mentions of Israeli and Palestinian deaths



Israeli and Palestinian deaths (cumulative)





Citizens of states like Israel, which is closely allied with the Canadian government, are considered “worthy” and their deaths are treated with more detail, humanization, and outrage in media coverage.

Members of colonized nations like Palestine, whose interests are not supported by the Canadian government, are considered “unworthy” and their deaths are covered in a more low-key way, designed to keep a lid on sympathy and anger.

Even when Palestinians’ deaths are mentioned in the newspapers, the common use of passive voice creates ambiguity in the minds of readers about who is inflicting violence.

Palestinians often “died,” whereas Israelis often were “killed.”

Another repeated editorial flourish of *The Globe and Mail*, in the same sentence, was to identify the killers of Israelis while only identifying the geography where Palestinians were killed. “By official count on each side,” the newspaper’s correspondents wrote in a piece published Oct. 16, 2023, “more than 1,400 people were *killed by* Hamas in southern Israel and more than 2,778 have been *killed in* Gaza in the past 10 days.”[6] [Emphasis added.]

The sheer weight of the repetition of imbalanced descriptions of death is bound to influence and sway readers, alongside the broader political bias in coverage about the roots and context of the Israeli occupation and colonization of the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza.

The data was compiled by tagging as many articles as possible that mentioned death or words related to death, and then analyzing the relevant sentences. The Breach analyzed 2,088 sentences in *Toronto Star*, 2,571 in *National Post*, and 1,908 in *The Globe and Mail*.

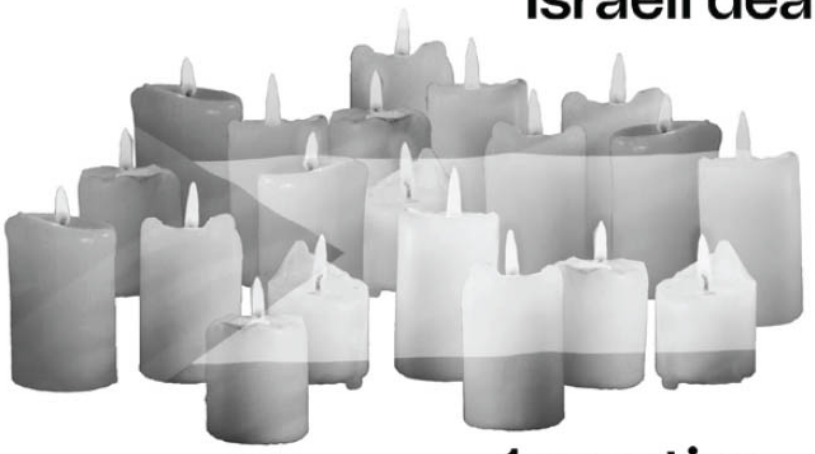
The survey was modeled on an analysis of the coverage of *The New York Times* conducted by computational scientist Holly Jackson, and illustrated by Pulitzer-prize-winning illustrator Mona Chalabi.[7]

The data about fatalities for the study was taken from the United Nations Humanitarian Affairs Coordination Office (OCHA), which because of communication blackouts likely has conservative estimates.

The Breach has made the code and descriptions of the methodology publicly available.[8]

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

2 dead Israelis = 1 mention of Israeli death



20 dead Palestinians = 1 mention of Palestinian death

TORONTO STAR

2 dead Israelis = 1 mention of Israeli death

17 dead Palestinians = 1 mention of Palestinian death

Coverage between October 7 — November 24, 2023

The Globe and Mail, *National Post*, and *Toronto Star* had not replied to questions from The Breach by time of publication.

When a massacre isn't a massacre

Besides the bias involved in the greater volume and proportion of attention given to Israeli deaths, there were notable biases in the quality of coverage.

All the Canadian newspapers were strikingly similar in making systematic editorial choices about their language, using highly emotive

terms for Israeli deaths that are likely to evoke sympathy and indignation, while not using the same language for Palestinian deaths.

In the sentences analyzed, *The Globe and Mail* used the term "slaughter" 27 times to describe Israeli deaths, *Toronto Star* 28 times, and *National Post* 89 times—usually as a factual journalistic description. The newspapers described Palestinian deaths that way zero times.

The newspapers also used the term "massacre" hundreds of times to describe Israeli deaths, almost always as factual journalistic description—with *National Post* using it the most often, 203 times.

Palestinians were never described as being massacred, but each newspaper quoted individuals, usually Hamas spokespeople, referring to a "massacre" on 19 occasions each.

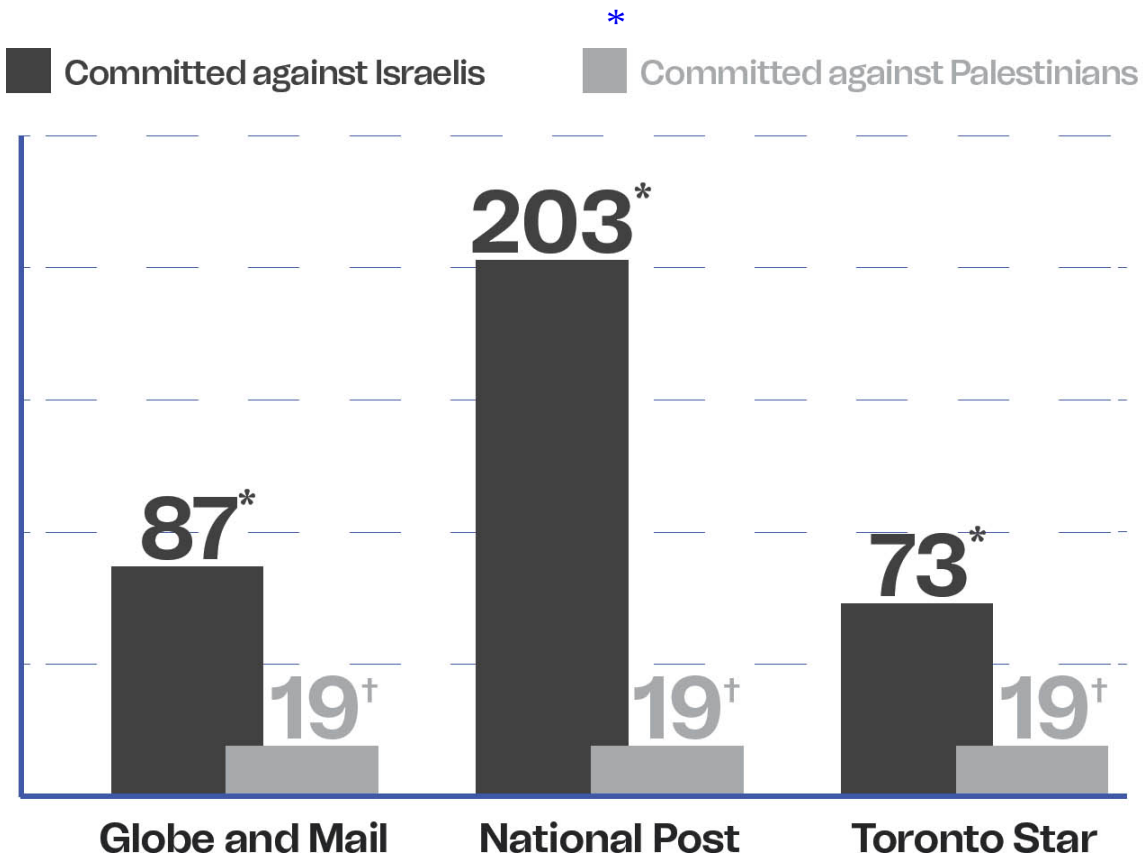
The newspapers have refused to use such terms to describe Israeli bombings in Gaza, despite Palestinians being killed in droves by attacks on schools, residential buildings, refugee camps, mosques, and public markets.[9]

As of mid-December, 2023, Israel had dropped 29,000 air-to-ground munitions on Gaza, including hundreds of 2,000-pound bombs, according to a CNN analysis.[10]

One such U.S. bomb leveled a residential apartment block in the Jabalia refugee camp, killing more than 100 civilians.[11]

Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari commented in mid-October that "right now we're focused on what causes maximum damage."[12]

Uses of the term "massacre"



*The overwhelming majority of usages of “massacre” was as factual description.
†All of these usages of “massacre” were quotes from Palestinians, not factual description.

Coverage between October 7 - Nov 24, 2023

An investigation by the Israeli publication +972 Magazine exposed that the Israeli military has files on the vast majority of its potential targets in Gaza—including residential homes—which lay out the number of civilians likely to be killed in any attack.[13]

The military has been using artificial intelligence to develop large target lists and has been granted expanded authorization to bomb non-military targets, leading to what one former Israeli intelligence officer said was “a mass assassination factory.”

The New York Times reports experts as saying that “even a conservative reading of the casualty figures reported from Gaza shows that the pace of death during Israel’s campaign has few precedents in this century.”[14]

To find a historical comparison for so many large bombs in such a small area, they quote a former Pentagon senior intelligence advisor saying we may “have to go back to Vietnam, or the Second World War.”

Despite the systematic nature of Israel’s lethal bombing of civilians, *The Globe and Mail* has reserved phrases like “methodical massacres” only for Hamas’s attacks.[15]

It often uses more sanitized language for the deaths of Palestinians, writing, for example, of “*horrific massacre* of civilians conducted by Hamas in Israel on Oct. 7 and the *deadly response* of the Israeli military in Gaza.”[16] [Emphasis added.]

The *National Post* used the most extreme—and racially-charged—language for Hamas militants.

They described them as “barbaric” and “savage” nearly 20 times, but never applied the same language to the Israeli military (they did quote two individuals saying this about Israel).

Whenever respective Israeli or Palestinian deaths were mentioned, the newspapers were far more likely to identify Hamas as responsible instead of Israel.

On Oct. 30, 2023, *The Globe and Mail* removed a Palestinian commentator’s assignment of blame to Israel. They wrote that Palestinian politician and doctor Mustafa Barghouti’s “main account on X was suspended Monday after a post in which he described how a one-day-old Palestinian child who died in Gaza had been ‘issued a death certificate before receiving a birth certificate.’”[17]

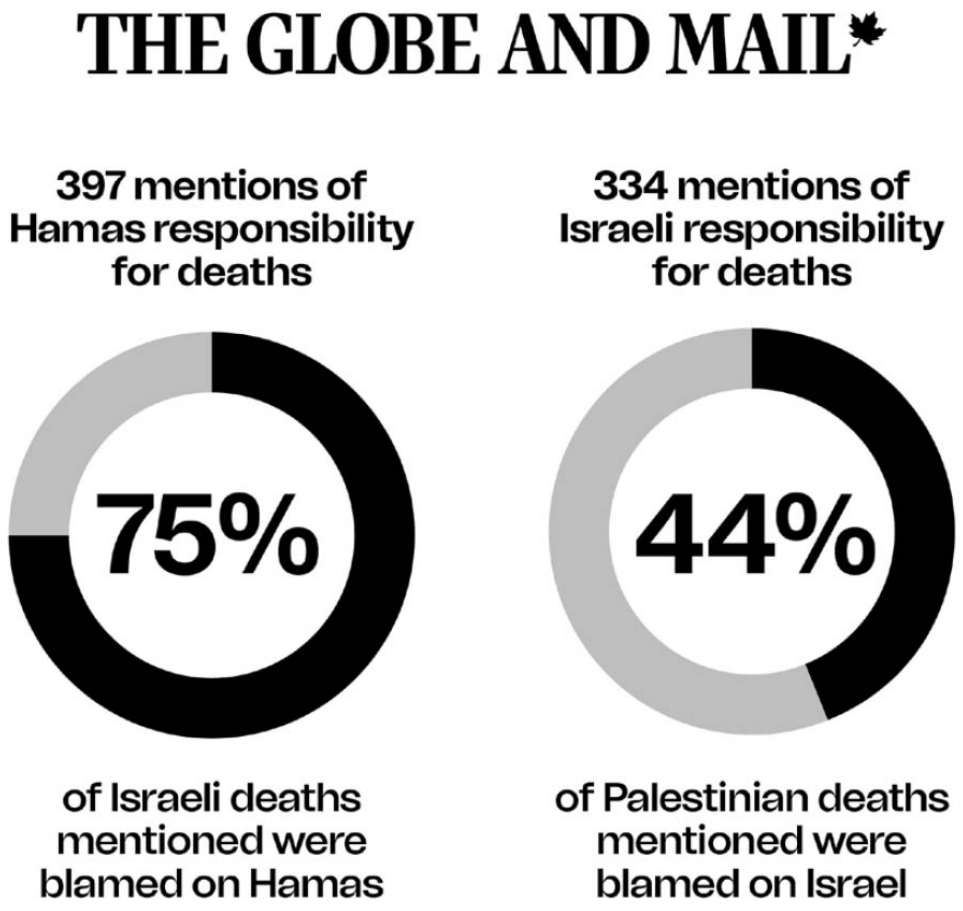
In his post, Barghouti had written that newly-born Adi Abu Mohsen had been “killed by Israel.”[18]

Anonymizing Palestinian deaths

At the sentence level, anti-Palestinian bias showed up in the fullness of humanizing details given to Palestinians and Israelis killed.

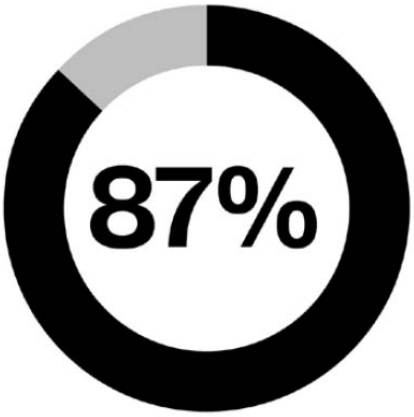
Israelis who were killed were more often named, their ages more often mentioned, and there were more references to their families, their professions, and place of birth—details that evoke more sympathetic emotion.

By contrast, Palestinians who were killed were often left unnamed, didn't often have their ages mentioned, and less frequently had their professions or place of birth referenced, as in *The Globe and Mail's* description on Oct. 23, 2023, of "fifteen members of the same family [who] were among at least 33 Palestinians buried in a mass grave at a Gaza hospital."[19]



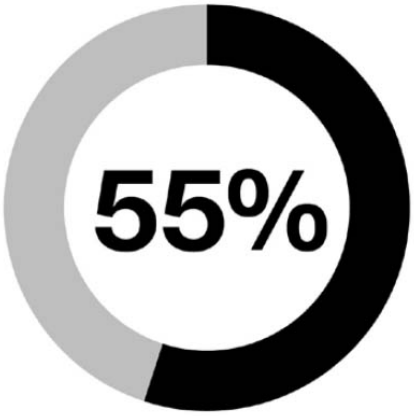
TORONTO STAR

Hamas responsibility for deaths



of Israeli deaths mentioned were blamed on Hamas

Israeli responsibility for deaths



of Palestinian deaths mentioned were blamed on Israel

In that article, a murdered Palestinian was simply referred to as the "shrouded corpse of a small child."

The Breach counted this as a mention of a Palestinian death in the data despite the framing.

National Post was the worst culprit of this imbalance, most commonly leaving Palestinians anonymous.

Systematic anti-Palestinian bias isn't the only factor in skewing the coverage of Palestinian and Israeli deaths in Canadian newspapers.

The Israeli government has cut off electricity to Gaza and targeted communications infrastructure, impeding better reporting of Palestinian deaths.[20]

The Israeli government also has a far larger communications and press relations apparatus, and Israeli government sources are treated with more authority by the Western media.[21]

"It is the peculiar fate of oppressed people everywhere that when they are killed," writer and professor Moustafa Bayoumi has written, "they are killed twice: first by bullet or bomb, and next by the language used to describe their deaths."[22]

Additional research was conducted by Helen Jacob, Saman Dara, and Sahaana Ranganathan.

2

CBC Says Killing of Palestinians Doesn't Merit Terms 'Murderous,' 'Brutal

By Emma Paling, *The Breach*

January 5, 2024

It turns out CBC News is aware they describe Israel's violence against Palestinians with sanitized language—and they actually believe it's justified.

In a letter responding to a complaint filed by a reader, the public broadcaster acknowledged that they've used terms like "murderous," "vicious," "brutal," "massacre," and "slaughter" to refer only to Hamas's attack on Israelis on Oct. 7.

But when it comes to the Israeli army's bombing of Palestinians, which has killed more than 22,600 people as of Friday,[1] CBC says they prefer to use terms like "intensive," "unrelenting," and "punishing."

The more evocative and sympathy-generating terms don't apply to Palestinian deaths, CBC argues, because Israel carries out its killings "remotely" instead of face-to-face.

CBC launched its highly revealing defence in an email reply to Jeff Winch, a retired professor at Humber College who had filed four complaints about CBC's coverage with the CRTC, Canada's telecoms regulator.

"The Hamas attack was referred to by the reporter as 'vicious,'" Winch wrote in one complaint, citing an instance in early November on CBC

Radio. “Why is it when Hamas attacks there is a toxic adjective attached but when Israel kills 8 times the number of people (including babies) no such adjectives are used?”

“This use of language attempts to minimize the ugliness of Israeli atrocities and get maximum hatred out of the Hamas attacks. It also serves to skew the reader’s empathy towards Israel and away from Palestinians—a further dehumanizing of an already downtrodden people.”

‘The events…are very different’

CBC’s senior manager of journalistic standards Nancy Waugh responded in a Dec. 5, 2023, email that Winch shared with The Breach:

> You wrote that CBC reporters refer to the October 7 attacks as ‘murderous,’ ‘vicious,’ or ‘brutal,’ but don’t use the same words to describe Israeli attacks that kill Palestinians.
>
> Different words are used because although both result in death and injury, the events they describe are very different. The raid saw Hamas gunmen stream through the border fence and attack Israelis directly with firearms, knives and explosives. Gunmen chased down festival goers, assaulted kibbutzniks then shot them, fought hand to hand, and threw grenades. The attack was brutal, often vicious, and certainly murderous.
>
> Bombs dropped from thousands of feet and artillery shells lofted into Gaza from kilometers away result in death and destruction on a massive scale, but it is carried out remotely. The deadly results are unseen by those who caused them and the source unseen by those [who] suffer and die.

> It’s a different kind of event and is described differently as ‘intensive,’ ‘unrelenting,’ and ‘punishing,’ raining death and destruction on one of the most densely populated places on earth… They are different stories, and we have tried to describe both accurately and vividly.

The former professor Winch called this “a terrible answer.”

“I don’t think the language should have to do with the comfort of the person delivering death,” he told The Breach in an interview. “It’s about the devastation and destruction and violence that’s happening to the victims.”

In an email, a CBC spokesperson told The Breach: “Respectfully, we flatly reject the suggestion Nancy Waugh’s response is an admission of a double standard.”

“Every story CBC News covers is different and as such may be described in different ways, but always in accordance with CBC’s journalistic standards and practices,” the spokesperson said. “With that in mind, we invite Canadians to review the complete archive of our journalism on this war since Oct 7 and judge for themselves whether we have lived up to our standards of balance, fairness, accuracy and impartiality.”[2]

But on its broadcasts, CBC has featured more Israeli than Palestinian voices, portrayed Israelis in more humanizing ways, and allowed Israeli military officials to lie on air.[3]

CBC has regularly used subjective descriptors for Hamas’ violence while not doing the same for the Israeli state. In articles, videos, and episodes of The National, CBC has described Hamas’ attack as “brutal” and “vicious,” and the militants’ “barbarism” and “inhumanity” in carrying out “unimaginable slaughter.”[4]

In the same pieces, Israel’s violence is described only as “retaliatory” and as “adding to the agony” of Gazans.

In her response to Winch, CBC’s Waugh elaborated on why the broadcaster does not use the same words to describe the killing of Israelis and Palestinians:

> In a report on the November 6 edition of The World at Six you wrote that the reporter described the killing of some 1,400 Israelis as a “slaughter,” but later said some 10,000 Gazans had been “killed.” Why not say “massacre” or “slaughter” or “mass murder,” you asked. Other reports at the time referred to 1,400 Israelis “killed” in the Hamas raid and included accusations of collective punishment, genocide and the mass murder of Gazans. As I said earlier, balance does not mean precisely parallel language.

CBC’s lack of balance has also extended to them barring journalists from sharing any information about the war on Gaza on social media that the public broadcaster has not itself reported.

This flies in the face of CBC’s general social policy which permits the sharing of “outside journalism if the story or piece is not available on CBC.ca and the source is credible”—meaning the broadcaster is indeed maintaining a double standard when it comes to Gaza.[5]

UN experts have warned that Israel’s actions in Gaza are “a genocide in the making.” In addition to the tens of thousands of Palestinians whom Israel has killed, 7,000 more people remain missing and presumed dead.[6] Nearly 60,000 others have been wounded and hundreds of thousands are facing disease because of the conditions created by Israel’s bombing of Gaza and blocking of food, water, electricity, and other necessities.[7]

Bias seen across Canadian media

This double standard is part of an industry-wide bias that has been well documented by The Breach.

Like CBC, CTV National News has featured disproportionately more Israeli voices than Palestinian on its broadcasts.[8]

An analysis by The Breach found that The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, and National Post used the term “slaughter” to describe the deaths of

Israelis scores of times, while never applying that word to Israel's killing of Palestinians.[9]

The newspapers also described the Hamas attack as a "massacre" on hundreds of occasions, while only using the word to describe the killing of Gazans when quoting Hamas spokespeople or Palestinians.

Winch, one of the creators of the oral history project Voices of Palestine, said he's been concerned with the Canadian media's coverage of this issue since 2002, when Israel killed 22 civilians in the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank.[10]

"I remember thinking something was wrong with the news. I remember thinking the pictures and the words were not lining up for me," he said. "I started reading and the more I read, the more it became clear that this whole conflict had been flipped upside down."

Winch said he believes the Canadian media has inaccurately portrayed the Israeli state as the victim of "savage Arab terrorists" by systematically distorting the context about the state's history of military occupation of the Palestinian territories.[11]

"I had been duped by our media."

3

Canadian Newsrooms Are Stifling Palestinian Perspectives

By Shenaz Kermalli, *J-Source*

December 23, 2023

A backgrounder on extremist politicians in the Israeli Knesset. A profile of a celebrated Palestinian poet and academic killed by Israeli airfire. A human-interest feature on Christians in Gaza fearful amid the war.

These are just a few examples of the story ideas pitched by journalists in Canadian newsrooms that never made it to air or publication in these news outlets. Some were initially approved and completed, but then pulled at the last minute. Others were declined, with no cited reason.

Story idea rejections are part of a picture of anti-Palestinian bias manifesting within newsrooms across the country. Journalists wanting to tell stories about Palestinians are feeling exhausted and unheard while doing their job, as J-Source has learned through interviews with multiple newsroom employees, all of whom requested anonymity for fears about their jobs and professional reputations.

Even providing context for the current crisis is seen as problematic by some editors.

“Stories get turned down all the time, but most of the time you can understand why, or how there is another story that takes more precedence,” one journalist at a mainstream broadcaster said. “But this is our top story. And if it’s our top story, we should be doing as many interviews that provide as much of a 360 view as possible.”

Many journalists say they have been discouraged from writing stories about context that they say should make the Canadian audience better informed about what is happening in Israel and Palestine. In one case, a journalist pitched an explainer on those currently put under so-called administrative detention by Israel so readers could understand the backdrop of the Hamas-Israel prisoner/hostage swap, but their newsroom showed no interest in this kind of expanded, contextual storytelling.[1] “The frustrating thing is I would feel better if they said ‘no,’ if they just said, ‘that’s outside of our scope,’ or even that they don’t know,” the journalist said. Instead, they say they are being met with “just a blank stare. I’m being ignored and not even acknowledged. And then they move on, right?”

There is a glaring dearth of deeper analysis from the stories covered in legacy media, says Dania Majid, president of the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association. “They’re really trying to keep it just to destroyed buildings and body counts and victims and not, ‘How did we get here? What is the Nakba? Or the occupation? The siege? What are Palestinian rights under international law?’ ” says Majid. “All that context would help the public understand what’s happening. I believe all that information is deliberately being withheld.”

Majid, who authored an extensive report on anti-Palestinian racism last year, said she and her colleagues, who are leading international law scholars, are rarely approached by Canadian legacy media journalists to offer expertise on Israel-Palestine.[2] “We’re often given a myriad of reasons as to why: They don’t have room for it, it doesn’t fit their story, or they don’t want to deal with the backlash,” she says.

On Nov. 5, an academic who moved to Canada as a refugee child submitted an op-ed pitch to a major news publication. The piece urged Ottawa to “live up to its reputation as humanitarian protector” and called for an immediate ceasefire after Israel dropped bombs on three refugee camps in Gaza in October.

In an email thread obtained by J-Source, the publication’s editor agreed to review the piece, but added: “I must also say off the top, however, any

talk of a ceasefire must also address how Israel is supposed to address Hamas."

In their response, the academic explained that based on their knowledge of and research on refugee studies and war—and it was in that capacity that they were proposing to write about alleged war crimes by one of the world's strongest military powers—this reality was in violation of international law.

The editor promptly declined the piece.

Majid, who learned of the exchange from the academic, said the response was off-putting and another example of how the media excludes Palestinian narratives. She thinks the editor's response "essentially barred most perspectives on Palestine," creating an unfair barrier by requiring those advocating for Palestinian victims of violence to first resolve the question of Hamas, effectively asking them to be experts on geopolitics first.

"Why must we come up with a solution to the Hamas question in order to express our humanity and experiences? Why must Palestine always be viewed through the lens of Hamas?" says Majid.

The frustration felt by individual journalists in legacy newsrooms across Canada reveals a significant bias in newsroom decisions on reporting on the ongoing war. In smaller, more independent spaces including The Breach and Canadaland, journalists have been more successful at publishing contextual stories and a wider array of perspectives from the Palestinian side. However, even those spaces have not been without struggle. The union for Canadaland employees signed a public letter last week citing concerns about recent "misleading," "targeted," and "irresponsible" statements by their publisher against pro-Palestinian voices.[3]

Quiet racism

Truth is the first casualty of war, goes the old adage, and how true that holds in the murky era of social media, where platforms are both a blessing and a curse—enabling people to send eyewitness accounts from the ground

while simultaneously being a vehicle for misinformation and disinformation.

In an op-ed last month, *Washington Post* journalist Karen Attiah suggested considering the role of race and colonialism in the current war. “Today’s violence is a legacy of the British Empire’s strategy to ‘divide and rule,’ by which a small island of European colonizers used strife as a weapon to enhance their power,” she wrote.[4]

“Given that many countries around the world were either colonized by the British or experienced U.S. military occupation in the post-World War II era, this conflict has come for many of us to symbolize ‘the West versus the Rest.’ ”

The powerful narrative that this is an “Us versus Them” conflict painted in black and white instead of a vastly complicated event rooted in a web of social, racial, political and military realities, serves only the most powerful actors—in this case the Israeli state, the United States and its allies.

Palestinian-American theorist Edward Said coined the term “orientalism” to explain how large groups of people with diverse histories become oversimplified through narrow and misleading portrayals as social and cultural “others.” Such portrayals lead to dangerous divisions based on ideological differences that may or may not exist, leading to the kind of “clash of civilizations” theory that Samuel Huntington put forth. These simplistic us-versus-them characterizations can have devastating consequences.

We are seeing this play out in the form of the dehumanization of Palestinians by several tiers of power, including members of the Israeli military and political elites, all the way down to journalists.[5]

Indeed, the war coverage from Canada’s largest newspaper chain, Postmedia, demonstrates a manifestly different treatment of Israelis and Palestinians. In a post on X on Nov. 2, 2023, journalist and opinion editor Davide Mastracci of The Maple, a reader-funded publication that advocates for the working class, compared the representation of Palestinians and Israelis on four different front pages of *National Post* after the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas.[6]

In his analysis, Mastracci showed how Israelis photographed on these pages were seen as either victims or heroes, while the few images published of Palestinians featured a compromised political leader, a Hamas fighter, or a crazed demonstrator on the streets of Toronto. In fact, the headline over the protestor image literally read: “Another week of terror rallies.”[7]

This sweeping reduction of Palestinians and demonstrators echoes the so-called “clash of civilizations” narrative.

Spectre of scrutiny

Such skewed representations are not limited just to Postmedia. Palestinian sources and story ideas are often subjected to an added burden of proof in a way that Israeli sources are not, a producer told me. In one instance, for example, they were told to fact check what a guest had said about a family member dying in an Israeli airstrike. “In order for me to ascertain whether this guest’s family member had died, I would need a death certificate and a family tree,” he said. “I’ve never been asked to fact check a guest’s personal sensitive claims before. So that upset me.”

And when Gaza has been covered, there is a singular focus. In an investigation of Bell Media’s CTV last month by The Breach, one producer said that the few commentators booked to speak for the Palestinian side only speak to the humanitarian crisis, but not about the geopolitics of the conflict.[8]

The producer told The Breach that there is “a hesitancy to bring on any kind of Palestinian activist or policy analyst who speaks about human rights, or can provide a political or historical context.”

Contextualizing is often misinterpreted as offering justification for Hamas’s actions against Israel, she added. But offering a background story “isn’t justifying and it isn’t condoning.”

One Palestinian-Canadian woman in British Columbia with siblings in Gaza told J-Source that she suspected she was not invited to speak on air after a pre-interview with CBC The National in October because she

focused her comments on what she wanted the public to know about Israel instead of how saddened or worried she felt about her sisters.

"They asked questions like: 'How do you feel about your family? How are you coping?' Of course I live on hell on Earth, and it's sometimes good for people to know I'm feeling this way. But if I got four minutes on CBC I don't want to waste it crying. It's not only about me and my siblings back home, it's about everyone and why this is happening, right?" Asking only about how her family is doing and how Canadians can help is tone deaf and reeks of white saviorism, she said.

Several experts on Palestine who are often called upon for interviews said they are so frustrated with Canadian news outlets that they called them out on social media for bias or an absence of basic political knowledge about the conflict.[9] In late October, global media communications professor Adel Iskandar spoke publicly about his cancelled interview with CBC, noting that a discussion about disinformation and censorship became "itself an act of censorship and disinformation."[10]

Iskandar, who teaches at Simon Fraser University, said he had a detailed conversation about the history of the conflict with the interviewer, who informed him that it's been difficult to get voices that reflect the Palestinian perspective in Gaza because of gatekeeping practices in the newsroom.

Iskandar told her he preferred a live interview instead of a pre-recorded one, and the producer agreed. "Shortly before the live, I got a call saying she was deeply apologetic and that they couldn't proceed and would instead prefer a recording."

Although he reluctantly agreed, Iskander told her how disappointed he was given the infrequency of hearing Palestinian voices on air. Five minutes later, she informed him that her bosses had pulled the story.

This wasn't an unusual experience for Iskandar, who says he spent an hour with one reporter discussing disinformation, but was frustrated because all their questions focused only on Hamas-led disinformation.

This, he said, reflects a bias because the reality is that the Israeli government has many more communication channels, spokespeople, press offices and embedded reporters. The reporter told Iskander that the story

wouldn't run based on their conversation. "I found that to be quite indicative of the climate inside the organization," he said. "There are certain things that are permissible and certain things that are not permissible."

The specter of scrutiny often cast on Palestinian narratives is reflected in language as well, most notably through the decision to attribute any data about the Palestinian collateral damage to their "Hamas-run" health ministry.[11]

"Hamas-run ministry" is an IDF construct aimed at delegitimizing all civilian and civic institutions in Gaza. In fact, the Gaza health ministry is run by bureaucrats and medical professionals with significant international oversight because of the nature of the reality of life in Gaza—not by militants. Over and over, experts have attested to the reliability of the ministry's numbers in Gaza in sources such as the leading medical journal *The Lancet*.[12] By this point in the war, however, hundreds of these medical experts and workers have been killed.

Meanwhile, interviews with Israeli government officials are commonly featured and often go unchallenged. Canadian news anchors—including those like the CBC's Rosemary Barton who historically have been upheld as bold interviewers—fail to interrogate Israeli guests.[13] This doesn't mean that accountability interviews have not taken place, however. J-Source has learned of instances in which such interviews were recorded, but were withheld for "being too divisive" or "not adding anything new."

"They will push (pro-Israeli talking heads) back on again and again and just let them repeat demonstrably false claims. For instance, the idea that civilians can go south for safety," one journalist told J-Source.

Stifling industry silence

It is clear that journalists in Canada and beyond are struggling with covering this war—yet journalism organizations have been oddly silent about its impact on their own. At least 90 journalists and sometimes their entire families have been killed by Israeli forces over 70 days. To put that

number in perspective, consider that a total of 68 media workers were killed on a global scale in the whole of 2022.[14]

On Nov. 3, 2023, the apartment building of Palestinian TV reporter Mohammed Abu Hatab was hit by an airstrike, killing him and 10 family members.[15] Upon learning of his death, his colleague Salman al-Bashir ripped off his "press"-emblazoned helmet and vest live on air, reducing his news anchor to tears.[16]

"There is no international protection at all, and no humanity," he declared. "These shields and hats do not protect us. They are just slogans that we only wear and they do not protect any journalist at all… We are waiting for our turn, one after the other."

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the first few weeks of this war have been the deadliest period for journalists covering conflict since 1992, when the group first began tracking.[17]

Somehow, though, the death of Palestinian journalists fails to jolt our industry in a way that it has done so around other journalist casualties and press freedom concerns globally. It wasn't long ago that Canadian and U.S. professional advocacy groups sounded the alarm about Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi's state-backed assassination or Ukrainian journalists killed on the frontlines of war with Russia.

Consider also the industry's responses to the genuinely outrageous but far less alarming tendency by former U.S. president Donald Trump to verbally insult journalists and denigrate the press. Trump's antics were considered "beyond the pale," an "existential threat to American freedom of the press," and "the stuff of authoritarian governments."[18]

In the face of dozens upon dozens of journalists being killed, and mounting allegations that Israel is targeting them and their families in Gaza, organizations like Journalists for Human Rights, the Canadian Association of Journalists, and the Canadian Journalism Foundation have been largely silent.[19] Individual journalists have tried to fill the void by launching grassroots calls for the protection of journalists in the war.[20]

More than two months into this crisis, Canadian news media has much to atone for. The editorial bias and false equivalences that have helped hide

the clear imbalance of power between the state of Israel and the scattered population inside the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, where little attention has been paid to daily attacks on Palestinians by settlers, is a clear transgression of journalistic practice and ethics.

The coverage is already having a direct impact on North American soil, as reflected by two chilling cases, the stabbing of a six-year-old Palestinian-American boy and his mother by their landlord in Chicago, who said he was "angry about what was going on in Jerusalem," and the shooting of three young Palestinian students in Vermont because they were wearing keffiyehs.

"We are failing as an industry," a journalist quoted in this article who resigned from their job in protest last month told J-Source. "In the span of 20 years (since the U.S. invasion of Iraq) there have been no lessons learned. There was never a pause to reconsider what we just went through or how we were complicit in it."

4

Globe and Mail Censored Criticism of Israel by Award-Winning Indian Author

By Martin Lukacs, *The Breach*

December 23, 2023

When Pankaj Mishra's article for *The Globe and Mail* was returned to him with every mention of Israel edited out, he was not surprised.

The well-known Indian author, who is in Toronto to deliver a lecture and receive the Weston International Award for his non-fiction writing, told The Breach that the incident "is part of a continuum of such attempts that I've personally encountered to suppress and stifle criticism of Israel."[1]

Winners of the $75,000 award, launched last year, customarily have an excerpt from their lecture published in *The Globe and Mail*.

But when Mishra submitted his text, which blasts the "unapologetically mendacious coverage of Gaza in the Western media," he received it back with every single mention of Israel cut out. In total, The Breach counted 17 examples.

"It was presented as an edit that was, essentially, going to focus on the main points of my talk," he said. "But I couldn't help seeing that even when I was talking about Israel in the part of the lecture which they wanted to publish, there too the references to Israel were taken out."

"I'm very strongly inclined to believe that this was a political decision to not carry criticism of Israel," said Mishra, who pulled the excerpt after receiving the proposed edits.

The Globe and Mail did not reply to a request for comment by time of publication.

Ironically, some of the newspaper's proposed cuts related to Mishra's descriptions of past experiences having his writing on Israel stifled.

"My own sporadic attempts to tackle the subject in the past made me aware of an insidious Western regimen of repressions and prohibitions," he wrote in one line that was cut.

His lecture, which is taking place at the Royal Ontario Museum, delivers a sweeping critique of the media's complicity in decades of western-backed wars, from the "War on Terror" to Israel's ongoing assault on Gaza, which has so far claimed at least 41,000 Palestinian lives.

Mishra, who is based in London, U.K., and Mashobra, India, regularly writes for *The Guardian*, *The New York Review of Books*, and other publications. He has written two novels and eight books of nonfiction, including *Age of Anger*, *From the Ruins of Empire*, and *Bland Fanatics*.

In an interview with The Breach before he delivered his lecture on Monday, Mishra discussed how his encounter with *The Globe and Mail*—"a very minor episode in a long list of atrocities both literal and intellectual"—was reflective of a broader crisis of western journalism and intellectual culture.

The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

The Breach: You say you weren't surprised by *The Globe and Mail*'s efforts to excise critical commentary about Israel. Why?

Pankaj Mishra: I think *The Globe and Mail*'s decision is one of the many such decisions that I've faced over the years. It's not at all shocking to people of non-Western ancestry. We have faced a consistent regime of censorship and suppression. Not just Palestinians, not just Arabs, you talk to even some of the most successful writers of non-Western ancestry, and each one of them will tell you many, many stories about editors saying "We can't do this. Can you change that? Can you rephrase that?"

That extends to direct criticism of Western politicians or Western writers or Western journalists. Among the other things that I say in the lecture, I name people who have been responsible for normalizing torture, such as Michael Ignatieff. I think it's not just criticisms of Israel that *The Globe and Mail* took out, but also where I directly named individuals and institutions, like *The Atlantic*, which were responsible for the degeneration of the public sphere long before Trump arrived. It's a real mistake to think it's all started with Trump. This has been happening for some time now. Before he started ranting against Haitian immigrants, you had people publishing articles normalizing torture in *The New York Times Magazine*.

My career more or less coincides with the beginning of the War on Terror, and I'm now in my mid-50s, and I've seen this happen the last two and a half decades, and have taken away some very bleak lessons from it.

That certainly fits with the evasions and erasures on Palestine that The Breach has been documenting in Canada's establishment media over the last year.

Since I was given this prize and I got in touch with my Canadian friends, I've been shocked to discover how the atmosphere of repression is dominant here, and has been for some time. I've just come to realize that this is a much broader problem. It's not confined to the U.S. and the U.K. and Germany and France. This is all tied to the larger question that I try to raise in my talk: what is going on with the mainstream Western media?

To what extent can it afford to lose its credibility, its legitimacy, and leave the space wide open for demagogues like Elon Musk or digital media to peddle its conspiracy theories and its fictions? We're talking about a degree of self-harm.

Young people now who are looking at these news outlets and thinking: "What is going on here with these traditional, legacy media outlets?" They will be asking these questions and turning away from these outlets. It affects me personally, because I've made my career in these particular institutions, in these periodicals. I would definitely want them to flourish.

I'm not coming at them from the outside and saying they should all be destroyed.

I want the legacy outlets to adjust their vision to this new world that we are all living in—now a heavily politicized world—but they seem incapable of learning from their blunders. The War on Terror was the first such major intellectual atrocity, with much of the media egging on and cheerleading a war on Iraq and Afghanistan. Then, 20 years later, trying to draw a veil of silence over the atrocities in Gaza. Two episodes of suppression, of propaganda by omission or obfuscation. It should be deeply concerning to everyone who cares about the life of the mind, intellectual freedom, and the overall health of democratic society.

You wrote a powerful essay in the *London Review of Books* in March entitled "The Shoah After Gaza,"[2] about the deep misgivings that certain Jewish writers, all of them Holocaust survivors, eventually developed about the uncritical support they had initially lent to Israel's policies toward the Palestinians.

We have these two major clashing historical narratives today, and they are unfortunately antagonistic. One is the narrative of the Shoah, broadly speaking, in which Israel really is at the centre, and the mass murder of Jews is invoked as a justification for what Israel does or what Israel has done over the years.

Obviously, a lot of Western countries were either directly responsible for the killing of Jews or were complicit in it in different ways, such as the European collaborators of Nazi Germany, all the people who refused to give shelter to Jewish refugees, even after the Holocaust—including Canada, of course. They try to deal with that horrible past of theirs by extending unconditional support to Israel and invoking, yet again, the Shoah narrative.

I think that narrative is increasingly challenged by the narrative of decolonization, and Israel finds itself accused of being a settler-colonial state, perpetuating the racist violence against non-white peoples that Western empires and Western colonialist states were once accused of.

I think this is a very dangerous situation where a sort of permanent polarization—emotional, psychological, political—is happening because these narratives cannot be reconciled. On the one hand, Israel is the exceptional nation which is allowed to get away with a lot of things that no nation is allowed to get away with because of this moral sanction it receives from Western powers.

Then there is the very legitimate protest of the Palestinians and the global majority, that the days of militant colonialism and expansionism finished a long time ago, and that Israel is an anachronistic colonial power and a racist power enforcing apartheid. This is something I wanted to explore and see whether there are ways to reconcile these. Because it seems to me that in many ways, world history has split into these two main opposed narratives.

The writers whose work you engaged with in that essay warned of the damage that would be inflicted on the memory of the Holocaust by its instrumentalization. Its extreme weaponization by the Israeli state and its defenders over the last year, beyond anything I've ever seen, is another kind of intellectual and psychic self-harm.

It really is very painful, because I think what's not really being sufficiently understood is the very sinister and dangerous global conflation of Jews with Israel. You have large numbers of Jews living outside of Israel in perfect amity with their surrounding populations. But I think the idea has gone around—and I get asked these very disturbing questions in places like India—that every Jewish person in the world is somehow responsible for the State of Israel and should be answerable for it, in the way we used to ask those questions of Muslims after 9/11. That they should be held responsible for what some bunch of fanatics did on that day, I find that incredibly disturbing. Simultaneously, there isn't enough pushback from Jewish organizations or various Jewish institutions to this idea and to distance themselves from an explicitly far-right regime in Israel, essentially a government of ethnic cleansers.

You've been a persistent, prescient critic of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The long arm of Hindu supremacism has reached here in Canada. Last year, we witnessed the assassination of a Canadian Sikh activist.[3] Targeted harassment of critics is widespread. Hindu supremacists, increasingly active in the country, are adopting the language of anti-racism and multiculturalism as a cover for their reactionary politics, in ways reminiscent of organized apologists for Israel.

I would be more specific and say that Hindu nationalism today very carefully and deliberately approximates the potent language of Israel, and that it is creating a memory culture around the partition of India and around the narrative of victimization of Hindus by Muslims, because it has realized how successful the Israeli narrative is in provoking support from Western countries and also insulating the country from criticism.

Modi is very deliberately trying to create a culture of memory, a culture of organized remembrance, whether it's deciding to observe partition as sort of Horrors day, as he calls it, and various other kinds of attempts to commemorate that event and various other events. Essentially, they're all connected to this narrative of how Hindus were humiliated, murdered, and forcibly converted to Islam over centuries.

Along with that, this kind of siege victim mentality, this militant expansionism. There was a piece in *Jewish Currents* a few months back about how Hindu-American activists have borrowed very clearly from the language of pro-Israeli Americans, and use that to delegitimize any criticism of the Hindu nationalist government, saying essentially that these people are anti-Hindu. So anti-Hinduism is the new antisemitism.

You have a book on the politics of anger. We have a master manipulator of mass disaffection in Canada in Pierre Poilievre, who's the leader of the Conservative Party. He's presented himself as a kind of challenger of the elite, though his biggest supporters, much like elsewhere in the world when it comes to right wing faux populists, are

the ultra-rich and corporate titans. What's your sense of the way in which he is an expression of a broader global dynamic?

I think the right is on the ascendant, and using and deploying and borrowing more and more from the arsenal of the far-right. I think there's a heightening of political rhetoric. I would say it's become more overtly white supremacist. Even in societies that claim to be immigrant societies—certainly the United States and maybe to a lesser extent Canada, which is nevertheless a society created by immigrants. This is something that is now in this mode of ethnonationalism. It's white supremacism in the West. It's Hindu nationalism in India.

At a time when there are no clear-cut solutions to the deep economic crises generated by a deeply unequal economic system of capitalism, I think one thing that all politicians of the right and the centre-right are converging on is how to define the national communities—how to define the internal and external enemy, how to channel people's anger—which is deeply rooted in the kind of injustices and humiliations they suffer on a daily basis: in their workplace, in their homes, deeply unequal systems in which they have to operate. How to channel all that anger and frustration against some of the most vulnerable people in those societies, and that includes minorities and immigrants.

You see that happening all around the world, and it's not an accident. I think it testifies to a global impasse. You've basically arrived at the end of a horrible experiment that has gone wrong—capitalist globalization—that has generated extreme levels of inequality and immiserated large populations, and yet it's unstoppable. There is no political will to address its severe inequalities, its injustices, so all politicians now do is essentially seek power through the most unethical and unscrupulous means for four or five years, then they are replaced by another bunch of unscrupulous people.

Talking of political principle and scruple in our public life almost seems like a utopian fantasy. We just have a bunch of incredibly unscrupulous people who want to protect their power. Unfortunately, there are a lot of

journalists who help them do precisely that, because they also want to protect themselves in their positions.

At places like the CBC, hosts of major shows are forced to apologize even for uttering the word "Palestine."

It's grown to pathetic and comical proportions, really, the attempt to kind of completely suppress the agency of Israel. You can talk about polio, but you won't mention Israel's role in that. You can talk about a ceasefire, but even the prime ministers of the U.K. and France and Germany put out a statement that talks about Hamas and Iran, but doesn't even mention Israel. Truly extraordinary and brazen.

That brazenness is a sign of weakness, which is something to be heartened by? There has been an incredible convulsion of awakening, especially among young people, where the blinders are falling away, and people are clocking into these systemic distortions of the media like never before.

In my lecture I mention young writers and their efforts to push back against this kind of propaganda and to create their own kind of outlets. Essentially, I think they really are the only hope for us right now. I have absolutely no faith in people in senior editorial positions in Western mainstream media. None whatsoever. I don't think they can change or that they can reform their institutions. Quite the contrary—I think as long as they are there, these institutions will get more corrupted and more compromised.

Addendum:

At the time of this article's publication, *The Globe* did not respond to our requests for comment. But when journalist Pacinthe Mattar wrote

about the episode in a piece in the *Toronto Star* (included in this volume), they issued a denial.

In an email, an editor at *The Globe and Mail* said that the edits stemmed from having to cut Mishra's 5,000-word draft "practically in half" in order to meet space requirements and that the edit "had absolutely nothing to do with criticism of Israel."

We have a copy of their suggested edits—and it proves they weren't telling the truth. They didn't only remove criticisms of Israel in the parts of the lecture they were not interested in publishing. Even in the sections they wanted, they carefully excised them.

Below are some examples (crossed out parts are *The Globe*'s proposed cuts):

For two centuries, Western countries subjugated peoples across Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, fuelled by the Social Darwinist belief now sacralised by Israel that a race, people or nation that did not dominate would instead be dominated, and that those who lost out in the global scramble for territories, resources and markets faced extinction.

We see this heightened consciousness very clearly today in the furious rejection by the non-Western world of the Western media's coverage of the violence in the Middle East, and demands from people of non-Western ancestry to urgently decolonize Western systems of knowledge. ~~It is also evident that the seemingly irreconcilable antagonism between Israelis and Palestinians is mapped on one of the most treacherous fault-lines of modern history: the "colour line," described by W.E.B. Du Bois as the central problem of international politics, the "relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea."~~

As a result, many middle-aged and older people today are willing to suspend disbelief in the malign fictions of far-right demagogues, podcasters and YouTubers. ~~Meanwhile, young readers in the West betray even lower expectations from Western news and analysis outlets as they turn to unmistakably non-Western (Al Jazeera) and open-source platforms (TikTok) for unfiltered news of Gaza.~~

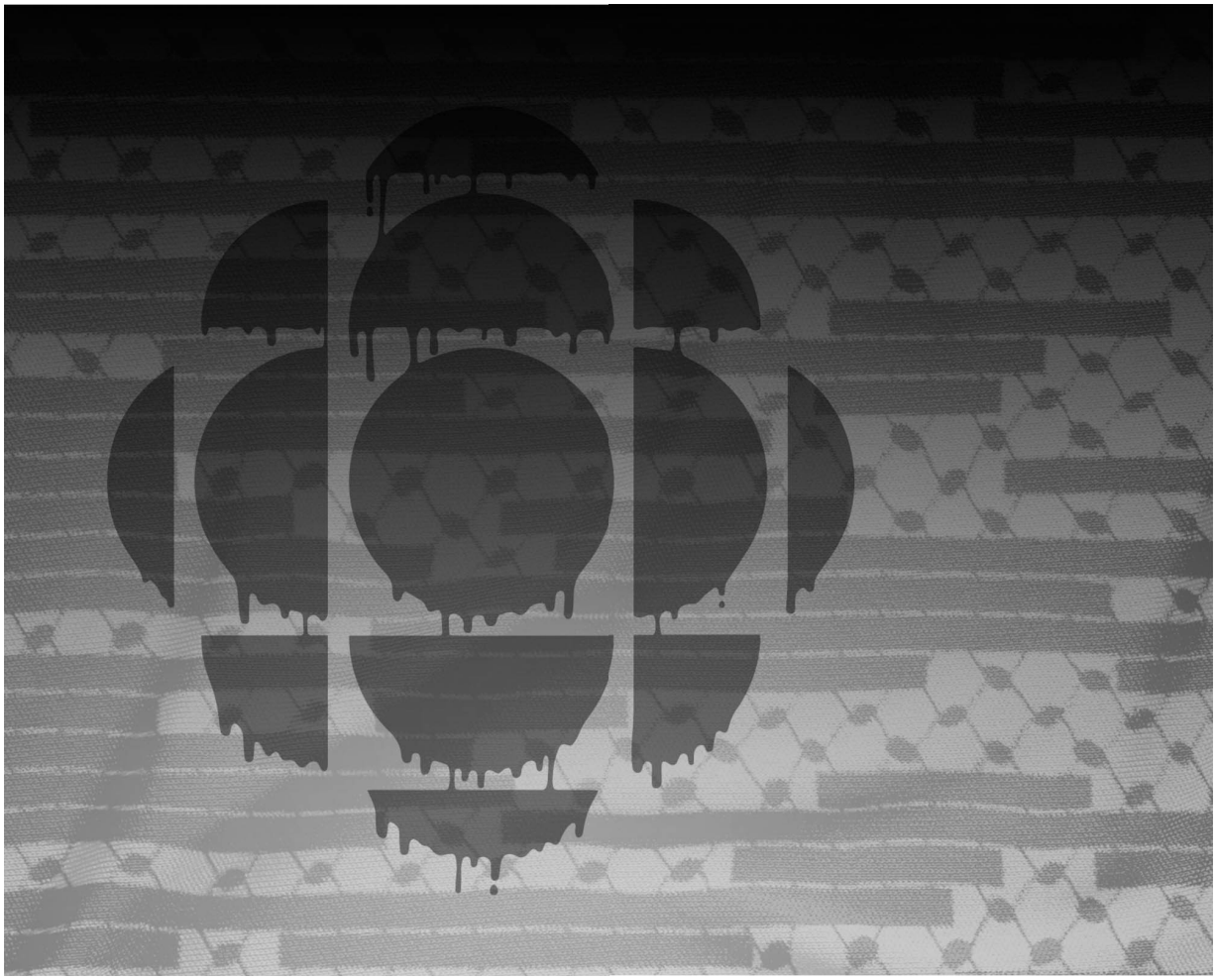
Below are parts of Pankaj Mishra's text that were removed by *The Globe and Mail* in their entirety:

"Even the liquidation of Gaza, which unlike many atrocities, has been live streamed by both its perpetrators and victims, is daily obfuscated, if not denied, by the main organs of the Western media."

"Certainly, the Western account of Israel's recent 'self-defense' yet again exposes the radical incongruity between what is said by mainstream journalists in the West and what the rest of us see happening in the world."

"Today, the war on terror is more widely accepted as a military and geopolitical failure. It is still not fully grasped as a massive intellectual fiasco: a doomed attempt by the media as well as the political class to forge reality itself. And partly because this disaster was unpunished—editors and writers pushing false narratives, and cheerleading violence, remained entrenched, and even received promotions—it is being reprised today in the Western coverage of Israel's war on Gaza."

"The conviction that 'diplomats lie to journalists and believe these lies when they see them in print' is verified as, while showering Israel with lethal weapons and munitions, American diplomats preside, with the help of a compliant press, over a charade of 'negotiations' to buy Israel more time to pursue land grabs and ethnic cleansing in Gaza and the West Bank."



The Fight Inside Newsrooms

CBC Has Whitewashed Israel's Crimes in Gaza. I Saw It Firsthand

By Molly Schumann, *The Breach*

May 16, 2024

The executive producer peered at me with concern. It was Nov. 16, 2023 and I had been called into a virtual meeting at CBC. I was approaching my sixth year with the public broadcaster, where I worked as a producer in television and radio.

He said he could tell I was "passionate" about what was happening in Gaza. His job, he told me, was to ensure my passion wasn't making me biased. He said I hadn't "crossed the line" yet, but that I had to be careful. The conversation ended with him suggesting that I might want to go on mental health leave.

I declined. My mind was fine. I could see clearly what was happening.

Earlier that day, I had spoken out in a meeting with my team at CBC News Network—the broadcaster's 24-hour television news channel. It was six weeks into Israel's siege and bombardment of the Gaza Strip, which had, at the time, killed over 11,000 Palestinians, the majority of them women and children. Legal experts were already suggesting that what was taking place could be a "potential genocide," with an Israeli Holocaust scholar calling it "a textbook case."[1]

I expressed concern to my team about the frequency of Palestinian guests getting cancelled, the scrutiny brought to bear on their statements, and the pattern of double standards in our coverage. After this, I pitched a reasonable and balanced interview: two genocide scholars with opposing

views discussing whether Israel's actions and rhetoric fit the legal definition of the crime.

Senior colleagues sounded panicked. My executive producer replied that we had to be "careful not to put hosts in a difficult position." They wanted time to consult with higher-ups before making a decision. A few hours later, I was sitting across from the same executive, being warned about "crossing the line."

The following afternoon, I showed up for what was supposed to be a typical meeting to go over the interviews we had lined up for the coming days—but some unusual guests were present. In addition to my co-workers, the faces of my executive producer and his higher-ups appeared on Google Meet.

The managers were there to talk about my pitch. They said they weren't vetoing it—they weren't meant to even make editorial decisions—but suggested our show wasn't the best venue. I pointed out that the network was deemed a suitable place for interviews with guests who characterized Russia's war on Ukraine and China's oppression of the Uighurs as instances of genocide. The managers looked uncomfortable. I was reassigned to work on a panel with two guests calling on the West to support regime change in Moscow and Tehran. (Ever since these unusual meetings had started, I was recording them for my protection.)[2]

But that wasn't the end of the blowback. The next week, late Friday afternoon, I received an email from the same two managers who had poured cold water on my pitch. They needed to speak to me urgently. Over the phone, I was asked to keep the conversation secret.

They told me I had hurt the feelings of some of my co-workers. But it was more than just hurt feelings: someone was accusing me of antisemitism.

I had, it appeared, "crossed the line."

Trying to work your way up to a permanent position at Canada's public broadcaster requires knowing the sort of stories, angles and guests that are acceptable—and which are out of bounds. As a precarious "casual" employee—a class of worker that makes up over a quarter of CBC's

workforce—it hadn't taken me long to realize that the subject of Israel-Palestine was to be avoided wherever possible.[3] When it was covered, it was tacitly expected to be framed in such a way as to obscure history and sanitize contemporary reality.

After Oct. 7, it was no longer possible for the corporation to continue avoiding it. But because CBC had never properly contextualized the world's longest active military occupation in the lead-up to that atrocity, it was ill-equipped to report on what happened next.

The CBC would spend the following months whitewashing the horrors that Israel would visit on Palestinians in Gaza. In the days after Israel began its bombing campaign, this was already evident: while virtually no scrutiny was applied to Israeli officials and experts, an unprecedented level of suspicion was being brought to bear on the family members of those trapped in Gaza.

My job required me to vet the work of associate producers and to oversee interviews, so I was well-positioned to see the double standards up close.

At first, out of concern that it would jeopardize my chances of landing a staff job that I had recently applied for, I voiced only mild pushback. But as the death toll mounted, my career started to seem less important. If journalists in Gaza were sacrificing their lives to tell the truth, I should at least be prepared to take some risks.

Besides, I naively told myself, it would be easier for me to dissent than most of my colleagues. I am of mixed Jewish heritage, having been raised by a father who fled the Holocaust as a young child and dealt with the life-long trauma and guilt of surviving while his family members were murdered by the Nazis. It would be more challenging, I believed, for cynical actors to wield false accusations of antisemitism against me.

I turned out to be wrong.

The Palestine exception at CBC

In the run-up to Oct. 7, a senior colleague said that if we were lucky, “the news gods would shine on us” and put an end to a stretch of “slow news” days. Waking up on that fateful Saturday to multiple alerts on my phone, I knew that both the world and my professional life were about to dramatically change.

Even before Oct. 2023, trying to persuade senior CBC colleagues to report accurately on Palestinians was a struggle. Here are some of the TV interview ideas that a colleague and I pitched but had turned down: Human Rights Watch’s 2021 report designating Israel an apartheid state; the Sheikh Jarrah evictions in the same year; Israel assassinating Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in 2022; and the Israeli bombing of the Jenin refugee camp in July 2023.[4]

The last of these ideas was initially greenlit but later cancelled because a senior producer was concerned that the host would have too much on her plate. Around this time, I also pitched someone from the Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem to talk about the potential impact of widely protested judicial reforms on Palestinians—but this was nixed for fear of complaints. These would become familiar excuses.

After Oct. 7, I dreaded going into work: every shift, the impact of the biases went into overdrive. Even at this early stage, Israeli officials were making genocidal statements that were ignored in our coverage. On Oct. 9, then-defence minister Yoav Gallant said, “I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel; everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we act accordingly.” Even after this comment, my executive producer was still quibbling over uses in our scripts of the word “besieged” or references to the “plight of Palestinians.”[5]

On Oct. 20, I suggested having Hammam Farah, a Palestinian-Canadian psychotherapist, back on the network. In an earlier interview he had told us that his family were sheltering in Saint Porphyrius Greek Orthodox church in Gaza City. The following week, I learned from social media that his step-cousin had been killed in an Israeli airstrike on the 12th-century building. My executive producer responded to my pitch via instant message: “Yeah,

if he's willing. We also may have to potentially say we can't verify these things though—unless we can."[6]

I was stunned. Never in my nearly six years at CBC had I ever been expected to verify the death of someone close to a guest, or to put a disclaimer in an interview that we couldn't fact-check such claims. That's not a standard that producers had been expected to uphold—except, apparently, for Palestinians.

Besides, even at that early stage, civil society had completely broken down in Gaza. I couldn't just call up the health authority or courthouse to ask that they email over a death certificate. I already had Farah's relative's full name and had found a Facebook profile matching a commemorative photo he had posted on Instagram. This was already more verification than I had done for Israeli interviewees whose loved ones had been killed on Oct. 7. A few days later, a different program on the network aired an interview with the guest using passive language in the headline: "Toronto man says relative was killed in airstrike that hit Gaza."[7]

I was being forced to walk a tightrope, trying to retain some journalistic integrity while keeping my career intact.

In early November 2023, I was asked to oversee production of an interview with a former U.S. official now working for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a pro-Israel think tank.

During the interview, he was allowed to repeat a number of verifiably false claims live on air—including that Hamas fighters had decapitated babies on Oct. 7 and that Gazan civilians could avoid being bombed if only they listened to the Israeli military and headed south. This was after civilian convoys fleeing southward via "safe routes" had been bombed by the Israeli military before the eyes of the world.[8]

As soon as I heard this second falsehood, I messaged my team suggesting that the host push back—but received no response. Afterward, the host said she had let the comment slide because time was limited, even though she could have taken the time from a less consequential story later on in the program.

The majority of Palestinian guests I spoke to during the first six weeks of Israel's assault on Gaza all said the same thing: they wanted to do live interviews to avoid the risk of their words being edited or their interview not being aired. These were well-founded concerns.

Never before in my career had I seen so many interviews cancelled due to fear of what guests might say. Nor had there ever been direction from senior colleagues to push a certain group of people to do pre-taped interviews. (CBC told The Breach it "categorically rejects" the claim that interviews were "routinely cancelled.")

On another occasion in November, a Palestinian-Canadian woman in London, Ont. named Reem Sultan, who had family trapped in the Strip, was scheduled for one such pre-taped interview. Because of her frustration over previous interviews that she had given and coverage of her family's situation being "diluted," she asked if she could go live instead.

When I asked the senior producer, he looked uneasy and said the interview should be cancelled, citing that the guest had already been on the network that week. I agreed that it would be preferable to interview a new Palestinian voice and said I had contact information for a number of alternative guests. However, after cancelling the interview with Sultan, the senior producer informed me that he didn't want another guest after all.

Editing out 'genocide'

Most shows on the network seemed to avoid airing any mention of "genocide" in the context of Gaza.

On Nov. 10, 2023, my senior producer pushed to cancel an interview I had set up with a Palestinian-Canadian entrepreneur, Khaled Al Sabawi. According to his "pre-interview"—a conversation that typically happens before the broadcastable interview—50 of his relatives had been killed by Israeli soldiers.

The part of the transcript that concerned the senior producer was Al Sabawi's claim that Netanyahu's government had "publicly disclosed its

intent to commit genocide." He also took issue with the guest's references to a "documented history of racism" and "apartheid" under Israeli occupation, as well as his suggestion that the Canadian government was complicit in the murder of Gazan civilians.

The senior producer raised his concerns via email to the executive producer, who then cc'ed one of the higher-up managers. The executive producer replied that it "sound[ed] like [his statement was] beyond opinion and factually incorrect." The executive manager's higher up chimed in, saying she thought the interview would be "too risky as a pre-tape or live [interview]."

Despite the guest's position aligning with many UN experts and Western human rights organizations, the interview was cancelled. (CBC told The Breach "the guest turned down our offer of a pre-taped interview," but Al Sabawi had said to the producers from the start that he would do a live interview only.)

In another instance, a Palestinian-Canadian guest named Samah Al Sabbagh, whose elderly father was then trapped in Gaza, had part of her pre-taped interview edited out before it went to air. She had used the word "genocide" and talked about the deliberate starvation of Palestinians in Gaza. The senior producer told me the edit was because of time constraints. But that producer and the host were overheard agreeing that the guest's unedited words were too controversial. (CBC told The Breach it "has not 'cancelled' interviews with Palestinians because they reference genocide and apartheid.")

By November 2023, it was getting harder to ignore the brazen rhetoric coming from senior Israeli officials and the rate of civilian death, which had few precedents in the 21st century.[9] But you wouldn't have heard about these things on our shows, despite a number of producers' best efforts. (By early 2024, the International Court of Justice's hearings—and later its ruling that Israel refrain from actions that could "plausibly constitute" genocide—forcibly changed the discussion, and the word "genocide" finally made some appearances on CBC.)[10]

But back in late October, I booked an interview with Adel Iskandar, associate professor of global communication at Simon Fraser University, to talk about language and propaganda from Israeli and Hamas officials. The host filling in that day was afraid of complaints, was concerned about the guest wanting to be interviewed live, and judged him to be biased. Yet again an interview was cancelled.

A secret blacklist?

One Saturday in mid-October, I arrived at work shortly after the airing of an interview with the prominent Palestinian-Canadian lawyer and former spokesperson for the Palestine Liberation Organization, Diana Buttu.

There had been a commotion, I was told. A producer from The National—the CBC's flagship nightly news and current affairs program—had apparently stormed into the newsroom during the interview saying that Buttu was on a list of banned Palestinian guests and that we weren't supposed to book her.

I heard from multiple colleagues that the alleged list of banned Palestinian guests wasn't official. Rather, a number of pro-Israel producers were rumoured to have drawn up their own list of guests to avoid.

Later, I was told by the producer of the interview that, after the broadcast, Buttu's details had mysteriously vanished from a shared CBC database. By then, I had also discovered that the name and contact details for the Palestinian Ambassador Mona Abuamara, who had previously been interviewed, had likewise been removed. It didn't seem coincidental that both guests were articulate defenders of Palestinian rights.

While producers distressed by the CBC's coverage of Gaza were speaking in whispers, pro-Israeli colleagues felt comfortable making dehumanizing comments about Palestinians in the newsroom.

In one case, I heard an associate producer speak disparagingly about a guest's decision to wear a keffiyeh for an interview before commenting that

“[the host] knows how to handle these people.” This guest had dozens of family members killed by the Israeli military in Gaza.

It seemed the only type of Palestinian guest CBC was interested in interviewing was the sad, docile Palestinian who talked about their suffering without offering any analysis or solutions to end it. What they did not want was an angry Palestinian full of righteous indignation toward governments complicit in their family’s displacement and murder.

At this stage, I was starting to feel nauseous at work. And then one Saturday night, that sickness turned into anger.

I had been asked to finish production on a pre-taped interview with a “constructive dialogue” researcher on incidents of campus hostilities over the war and how to bring people together—the sort of interview CBC loves, as it’s a way to be seen covering the story without actually talking about what’s happening in Gaza.

I carried out the task in good faith, writing an introduction leading with an example of antisemitism and then another of anti-Palestinian hate, taking care to be “balanced” in my approach. But my senior producer removed the example of anti-Palestinian hate, replacing it with a wishy-washy “both sides” example while leaving the specific serious incident of antisemitism intact. He also edited my wording to suggest that pro-Palestinian protesters on Canadian campuses were on the “side” of Hamas.

I overheard the host thank the senior producer for the edits, on the basis that incidents of antisemitism were supposedly worse. While the introduction of these biases into my script was relatively minor compared to some other double standards I witnessed, it was a tipping point.

I challenged the senior producer on why he had made my script journalistically worse. He made up a bad excuse. I told him I couldn’t do this anymore and walked out of the newsroom, crying.

Truth-telling about CBC

That evening at home, the nausea and the anger dissolved, and for the first time in six weeks I felt a sense of peace. I knew it was untenable to stay at CBC.

At a team meeting the following week, in mid-November, I said the things I had wanted to say since the start of Israel's assault on Gaza.

I prefaced the conversation by saying how much I loved my team and considered some coworkers friends. I said the problems weren't unique to our team but across the CBC.

But the frequency of Palestinian guests getting cancelled, the pressure to pre-tape this one particular group, in addition to the unprecedented level of scrutiny being placed on them, demonstrated a pattern of double standards. I said there seemed to be an unspoken rule regarding words like "genocide."

I pointed out that Arab and Muslim coworkers, especially those who were precariously employed, were scared of raising concerns, and that I and others had heard dehumanizing comments about Palestinians in the newsroom. (CBC told The Breach that there "have been no specific reports of anti-Palestinian and Islamophobic comments in the newsroom for managers to respond to or follow up.")

I said that two decades since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, it was widely acknowledged that the media had failed to do their jobs to interrogate the lies used to justify a war and occupation that killed one million Iraqis—and that as journalists we had a special responsibility to tell the truth, even if it was uncomfortable.[11]

A couple of coworkers raised similar concerns. Others rolled their eyes. (CBC told The Breach that it doesn't recall anyone else raising concerns in the meeting, but audio recordings show otherwise.)

The question of why there was nervousness around this issue came up. I said one reason why we were averse to allowing Palestinian guests to use the "G-word" was because of the complaint campaigns of right-wing lobby groups like HonestReporting Canada.[12]

Indeed, in just six weeks, there were already 19 separate instances of HonestReporting going after CBC journalists, including a host on our team. HonestReporting had also claimed responsibility for the firing at two other

outlets of two Palestinian journalists, one of whom was on maternity leave at the time.[13]

All of this had a chilling effect. Hosts and senior colleagues frequently cited the threat of complaints as a reason not to cover Israel-Palestine. During my time there, a senior writer was even called into management meetings to discuss her supposed biases after a HonestReporting campaign targeted her. Her contract was cut short.

This policing of media workers' output reinforced existing institutional tendencies that ensured CBC rarely deviated from the narrow spectrum of "legitimate" opinions represented by Canada's existing political class.

Certain CBC shows seemed to be more biased than others. The National was particularly bad: the network's primetime show featured 42 per cent more Israeli voices than Palestinian in its first month of coverage after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, according to a survey by The Breach.[14]

Although some podcasts and radio programs seemed to cover the war on Gaza in a more nuanced way, the problem of anti-Palestinian bias in language was pervasive across all platforms.

According to an investigation in The Breach, CBC even admitted to this disparity, arguing that only the killing of Israelis merited the term "murderous" or "brutal" since the killing of Palestinians happens "remotely."[15] Images of children being flattened to death in between floors of an apartment building and reports of premature babies left to starve in incubators suggested otherwise.

I spoke to many like-minded colleagues to see if there was any action we could all take to push back on the tenor of our coverage, but understandably, others were reluctant to act—even collectively—out of fear that doing so would endanger their jobs. Some of those colleagues would have loved to have walked out, but financial responsibilities stopped them.

There had been previous attempts at CBC to improve the public broadcaster's coverage of Israel-Palestine. In 2021, hundreds of Canadian journalists signed an open letter calling out biases in the mainstream media's treatment of the subject.[16]

A number of CBC workers who signed the letter were hauled into meetings and told they either weren't allowed to cover the subject or would have any future work on the issue vetted. A work friend later regretted signing the letter because she got the sense that she had been branded as biased, leading to her pitches on Palestine being more readily dismissed.

Smeared as antisemitic

In mid-November 2023, after laying out my concerns to my colleagues, the regular weekly pitch meeting took place. It was then that I pitched the two genocide scholars, before having to attend that virtual meeting with my executive producer—where he suggested I go on mental health leave—and yet another meeting with two managers who raised concerns over my pitch the next day. But the most unpleasant meeting with management was about to come.

A week later, I was accused of antisemitism on the basis of something I didn't even say. According to a manager, someone had accused me of claiming that "the elephant in the room [was] the rich Jewish lobby." (CBC told The Breach that "employees expressed concerns" that what she said was "discriminatory".)

The accusation was deeply painful because of my Jewish heritage and how my dad's life—and, as a consequence, my own—was profoundly damaged by antisemitism. But I also knew I could prove that it was baseless: I had recorded what I said, anxious that someone might twist my words to use them against me.

What I had actually said, verbatim, was this:

"I just want to address the elephant in the room. The reason why we're scared to allow Palestinian guests on to use the word 'genocide' is because there's a very, very well funded [sic], there's lots of Israel lobbies, and every time we do this sort of interview, they will complain, and it's a headache. That's why we're not doing it. But that's not a good reason not to have these conversations."

I stand by my statement. HonestReporting Canada is billionaire-funded.[17] In December 2023, HonestReporting bragged about having "mobilized Canadians to send 50,000 letters to news outlets."[18] The group has also published a litany of attacks on journalists at CBC and other publications who've done accurate reporting on Palestine, and created email templates to make it easier for their followers to complain to publications about specific reporters.

Other, similar pro-Israel groups like the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) and the Canary Mission employ similar tactics to try to silence journalists, academics, and activists who tell the truth about Israel-Palestine.

I told the manager it was telling that instead of following up on the racist comments I had heard from colleagues about Palestinians, I was the one being accused of antisemitism and discrimination—on the basis of words I hadn't even uttered.

The banality of whitewashing war crimes

When I handed in my resignation notice on Nov. 30, 2023, I felt relieved that I was no longer complicit in the manufacturing of consent for a genocidal war of revenge.

Despite my experience, I still believe in the importance of the national broadcaster to act in the public interest by reporting independently of both government and corporate interests, presenting the truth and offering a diverse range of perspectives.

However, I believe that CBC has not been fulfilling these duties when it comes to its coverage of Israel-Palestine. I believe that in the future, historians will examine the many ways that CBC, and the rest of mainstream media, have all failed to report truthfully on this unfolding genocide—and in doing so likely accelerated their delegitimization as trusted news sources.

Before resigning, I raised the issue of double standards with various levels of the CBC hierarchy. While some members of management pledged to take my concerns seriously, the overall response left me disappointed with the state of the public broadcaster.

After my appeal to my coworkers in mid-November, I had a phone conversation with a sympathetic senior producer. He said he didn't think my words at the meeting would interfere with my chances of getting the permanent staff job I had long dreamed of. Despite this assurance, I was certain that I wouldn't get it now: I knew I'd crossed the line for saying out loud what many at CBC were thinking but couldn't say openly. Indeed, I wouldn't have spoken out if I hadn't already decided to resign.

As a kid, I had fantasies of shooting Hitler dead to stop the Holocaust. I couldn't fathom how most Germans went along with it. Then, in my 20s, I was gifted a copy of Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann In Jerusalem: A Report On The Banality Of Evil* by anti-Zionist Israeli friends. I've been thinking a lot about that piece of reportage when trying to make sense of the liberal media's complicity in obfuscating the reality of what's happening in the Holy Land. As Arendt theorized, those who go along with genocides aren't innately evil; they're often just boring careerists.

To be sure, while there are a number of senior CBC journalists who are clearly committed to defending Israel no matter its actions, many journalists just follow the path of least resistance. The fact that permanent, full-time CBC jobs are in such short supply, combined with threats of looming cuts, only reinforces this problem.

I still hear from former colleagues that pitch meetings are uphill battles. Some shows are barely covering Gaza anymore.

Being a journalist is a huge privilege and responsibility, especially in a time of war. You're curating the news for the audience; deciding which facts to include and which to omit; choosing whose perspectives to present and whose to ignore. I believe that a good journalist should be able to turn their critical eye, not just on the news, but on their own reporting of the news. If you're unable to do this, you shouldn't be in the profession.

I purposefully haven’t given away identifiable information about my former colleagues. Ultimately, this isn’t about them or me: it’s part of a much wider issue in newsrooms across the country and the Western world—and I believe it’s a moral duty to shed a light on it. If I didn’t, I’d never forgive myself.

Just as I’m not naming my colleagues, I’m writing this using a pseudonym. Although the spectrum of acceptable discourse continues to shift, the career consequences for whistleblowers on this issue remains formidable.

I encourage fellow journalists who refuse to participate in the whitewashing of war crimes, especially those with the security of staff jobs, to speak to like-minded coworkers about taking collective action; to approach your union steward and representative; and to document instances of double standards in your newsrooms and share them with other media workers.

It was scary, but I have no regrets about speaking out. My only regret is that I didn’t write this sooner.

6

Fighting for Fair Coverage of Palestine

By Zahraa Al-Akhrass, *Briarpatch*

April 10, 2024

I remember the first few weeks of the ongoing genocide in Gaza. I lost weight and couldn't take care of myself or my baby. Being far away in Canada, I couldn't close my eyes at night out of fear my loved ones in Gaza would be killed while I was asleep. Eventually, they were.

I followed the news closely every day and night. It was shocking (yet also expected) how Western outlets treated information from Israeli sources compared to Palestinian ones. Two different standards for fact-checking.

For instance, major Western outlets like CNN published the now-debunked lie that Hamas beheaded Israeli babies in October 2023 without evidence from Israeli officials, and others like CBC, *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, and *The Toronto Sun* didn't challenge the lie when it came up in their reporting. Later the same month, when the Gaza Health Ministry reported that over 7,000 Palestinians had been killed many of those same outlets instilled doubt in readers about the death toll by including that the ministry is "Hamas-run." To counter this, the ministry released a list of names of martyrs to prove those numbers were real people.[1]

I know why this is. In my years in the newsroom of a major Canadian news organization, I witnessed the so-called "editorial standards" that work to silence Palestinian voices and uplift Israeli ones. The process of learning about those "standards" was painful and I always felt conflicted about being part of the system. Over time, it became too unethical to stay in.

Behind Western media's distorted coverage of Israel and Palestine is a mix of deep ignorance, pro-Israel bias, anti-Palestinian racism, white supremacy, and media's refusal to change. During my years as a video journalist with Global News, I educated my colleagues about Palestine, brought Palestinian voices on air, and provided the company with translation and contextual and historical facts. I tried to bring in change and challenge the biased status quo. But after posting on social media in solidarity with Palestinians in October 2023, I was fired.

Suspecting pro-Israel bias in the newsroom

The first time I sensed that criticism of Israel was taboo in Canadian media was long before Oct. 7, 2023, and long before Israel's current genocidal assault on Gaza.

In September 2020, the normalization deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates was announced. I was producing a YouTube video on the deal for Global, for which I wrote that the normalization deal "threatens to leave the Palestinians further isolated."

Normalization deals between Arab countries and Israel imply that Israel's ongoing occupation and apartheid system against Palestinians are acceptable and that it can build friendly relationships with Arab countries despite all of that. They indeed further isolate the Palestinians and don't help the cause of freedom and justice for Palestinians, which is why I wrote that line.

According to saved messages, the superior vetting my content told me to remove the word "threatens" because it could be interpreted as "editorializing." They suggested we do our best to avoid any potential "backlash" especially for stories on Israel and Palestine.

That was the first time I wondered whether such a small margin of freedom to criticize Israel was acceptable to me. I felt like potential pressure from some groups held more importance than my commitment to the truth and to fair coverage.

Less than a year later, in April 2021, Israel was pushing to ethnically cleanse around 28 Palestinian families from the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah and have Israeli settlers illegally occupy the area.

A few weeks later, Israel started bombing Gaza in response to warning rockets from Hamas. Only then did Global News—and the rest of Western media—finally cover the story, portraying Israel as the victim of resistance rockets while downplaying Israel's ethnic cleansing efforts in Sheikh Jarrah. A distorted image of reality.[2]

In protest of the biased narrative, I signed an open letter alongside other journalists to newsroom leaders in Canadian media demanding more nuanced coverage of Palestine.[3] I learned later that some of those journalists were told by their superiors they would be censored from covering Palestine in the future.[4] I was worried I might be next; however, I was dealing with a bigger problem.

I was posting on my social media platforms about the atrocities Israel was committing against Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. Pro-Israel group HonestReporting Canada (HRC) picked up my tweets and launched a campaign calling on Global News to "address" what HRC called "anti-Israel bias" in my tweets.[5]

Scared for my career and any potential threats from HRC's followers, I removed all tweets. I felt like I was being suffocated, unable to speak the truth about my people's suffering. I left one photo up on Instagram of myself at a protest, holding a sign that said "Israel kills children, attacks journalists"—a proven fact. I deleted that one a few days later too, a decision I made under pressure.

I was disappointed, to say the least. I promised myself that would be the last time I gave in to such pressure.

A year later, on May 11, 2022, Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was shot by an Israeli sniper while wearing her press vest and helmet when she was covering an Israeli raid on the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, according to eyewitnesses.

I was on shift and volunteered to cover the story. I worked on translating the emotional conversation her colleagues had while under fire from Israeli soldiers. I produced a YouTube video and wrote that she was killed by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) fire, citing eyewitness testimonies included in the video.

I ended up walking away from the story due to what Canadian media calls “editorial disagreements” and someone else finished off the script and published the video I worked on. They wrote what I refused to write because it felt unethical to me.

Global’s video, published on May 11, described Abu Akleh’s killing using the passive voice: “Abu Akleh, a veteran journalist working for Al Jazeera, was killed on Wednesday.[6] She was reporting on an Israeli raid into the occupied West Bank when she was shot in the head.” The video then quotes journalist and eyewitness Ali Samoodi who says that “Israeli snipers are to blame,” followed by a summary of a statement from the Israeli government that “it’s impossible to know who fired the shot without examining the fatal bullet, suggesting a joint investigation.”

A subsequent September 2023 United Nations investigation found that “Israeli security forces used lethal force without justification [...] and intentionally or recklessly violated the right to life of Shireen Abu Akleh.”[7]

The day I walked away from covering Abu Akleh’s killing, I vented on my Instagram stories to my followers about how disappointed I was that I couldn’t finish the assignment. I felt that I could no longer accept this small margin of freedom when it came to covering Palestine and that I had to push for a change. This was especially true after seeing how Canadian media reported on Ukrainian resistance to Russia’s invasion, including quotes from people calling fighters “heroes.” Meanwhile, outlets shamelessly label pro-Palestine protesters “terrorist supporters.”

Fast forward to October 2023—I took to my social media platforms to call out Western politicians’ support and media’s impunity for Israel in its attack on Gaza, despite the Israeli defence minister’s genocidal rhetoric calling Palestinians “human animals” and ordering a full siege on Gaza, allowing no food, water, fuel, or electricity to enter the city. I was on

maternity leave at the time, and not involved in covering the story for Global News. The least I could do was to use my social media platforms for advocacy.

A superior reached out and reminded me of a social media policy that requires all newsroom employees to stay “fair” and “balanced” despite personal views on the situation.[8] They advised me to remove some of my reply tweets and to stop posting “publicly” to my Instagram stories. Reading that email, I understood one thing: I was being asked to remain silent in the face of Israel’s genocidal attack. This time I chose to push back.

I responded with a long email, writing that “I oppose the Israeli occupation of the historical land of Palestine and my beliefs are shared by millions of people around the world, including of Global’s audience […] You might find this [‘partial’] and ‘biased’ but I refuse to be called anything but ‘fair’ to the oppressed people of my country.”

I was then presented with a second and final demand to remove social media posts and stop posting in the future. My superior refused to provide a list of posts the company claimed violated their policies. After repeated requests, the superior provided some guidance on the types of posts the company was “very concerned” with: posts with the hashtags #GazaGenocide, #GazaUnderAttack, and #FreePalestine.

When I read that, my jaw dropped. How can journalism that doesn’t even acknowledge that Gaza is under attack be “fair” and “balanced”?

Less than 24 hours later, Global News fired me while Israel was committing a genocide against Palestinians. Despite the company’s claim that my termination met the threshold for cause, they offered me a five-figure severance in exchange for me signing a document agreeing not to take any legal action for wrongful dismissal or discuss the terms of the severance, among other things. I refused the severance offer, filed a grievance with my union, and went public with my story.

Was I shocked? In one way, yes I was, as a Palestinian, Muslim immigrant who once believed in the values of freedom of speech, diversity,

and inclusion in Western institutions. But looking back at the smaller incidents over the years, I think this breakup was inevitable.

“Fair” coverage of a genocide

On the phone call on Oct. 17, 2023, in which I was informed of the termination decision, the superior who fired me told me I wasn’t able to communicate in a “fair and balanced” manner about Israel’s attack on Palestinians.

But who decides what’s “fair and balanced” about a genocide? A white middle-aged superior who had the audacity to judge me, a Palestinian with relatives in Gaza, on my ability to tell my own people’s story?

Canadian legacy media treats racialized people like me like tokens. We’re paraded in diversity and inclusion reports, just to be banned from covering the topics that matter most to us. We’re told to take down tweets against genocide. We’re judged to be “too emotional” when a story affects us directly, and, after a few years, we’re pushed out the door.

What happened to me is a symptom of a deeper problem in Canadian and Western organizations: white supremacy. This pattern of suppressing Palestinian and pro-Palestine voices has been going on for years behind closed doors at Canadian institutions.

This has been a common struggle I’ve heard about from colleagues across Canadian newsrooms. We’re banging our heads against the wall trying to get decision makers in the newsroom to listen to us. They choose not to. Is that fair? Balanced? Ethical?

When Putin invaded Ukraine, Canadian media outlets advocated for Ukrainian sovereignty, supported Ukrainians resisting Putin’s invasion, and called for the freedom of Ukrainians. But when it comes to Palestine, journalists are told to remain silent in the name of fairness and balance and not to hold Israel accountable for either its recent war crimes in Gaza or 76 years of occupation and apartheid against Palestinians. My people are not seen as equal. Palestinians are being massacred by the hundreds daily, but

Western media says we as people don't deserve the same "fair" coverage Ukrainians get.

Canadian media is rife with anti-Palestinian bias. Describing the killing of a Palestinian in the passive voice; equating Israel, an occupying force supported by global powers, with besieged Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza; and not decrying Israel's killing of more than 100 journalists since October 2023 are all biased choices.

This anti-Palestinian bias is proven. An investigation by The Breach found that the largest Canadian newspapers, *National Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *Toronto Star*, reported on Palestinian and Israeli deaths disproportionately.[9] For all three, "dozens of Palestinian deaths were required to merit just one mention in the newspaper, while there was one mention of Israeli deaths for every two Israelis who died." In another investigation, they found that CBC uses terms like "murderous," "vicious," "brutal," "massacre," and "slaughter" to refer to Hamas' attack on Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023, but describe the Israeli army's bombing of Palestinians with terms like "intensive," "unrelenting," and "punishing."[10]

These editorial decisions matter. They have the power to change the narrative on Palestine, Palestinian resistance, and Israeli occupation.

By pushing journalists who advocate and organize for Palestinians to the side, Canadian and Western media not only fail those journalists—they fail their audience, too. They fail in their obligation to hold the oppressor accountable. Most importantly, they fail the more than two million Palestinians who have been under Israeli bombardment in Gaza since October 2023.

"Fair" coverage of what's going on in Gaza is coverage that calls Israel's crimes what they are: a genocide. It's not that complicated; it only requires a conscience. To choose to disregard the genocide and require newsroom journalists to stay silent about it is not only cowardly and unethical; it's complicity in Israel's war crimes.

Silence is complicity. It's consent. As Nobel Prize-winning journalist Maria Ressa says, "we have to actually speak when it matters." The lives of the more than 30,000 killed Palestinians matter enough for me to speak, no

matter the consequences. I only hope Canadian and Western media will see their lives as worthy enough to speak out.

7

Why I Left CTV News: The Fight for Press Freedom in Canada

By Iman Kassam, *The Rover*

October 24, 2024

In the fall of 2021, I found myself the target of an orchestrated harassment campaign.[1]

It was the first time I had ever heard of HonestReporting Canada (HRC)—a pro-Israel media watchdog. The campaign, which called on its members to "condemn" me, came in response to a TV report I produced for CTV News Montreal on the Wet'suwet'en protests. The weird part is that my coverage had nothing to do with the Middle East.

Montrealers gathered in support of the hereditary chiefs who were in a stand-off with the RCMP and the Coastal GasLink company in British Columbia. It was a strong and straightforward story. The night it aired, colleagues congratulated me. One anchor and senior producer wrote: "Your story was excellent. Well worth the energy you obviously put into it. Your expertise shone through."

However, the next morning I woke up to an onslaught of emails and DMs from HRC members who took issue with a visual detail: one of the people I interviewed was wearing a keffiyeh and holding a Palestinian flag. HRC labeled this man an "anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian protester," and what followed was weeks of relentless harassment flooding my inboxes, demanding that I be fired, claiming that "people like me should not exist."

Some said they knew where I lived.

I forwarded every message to my managers, every time requesting four things: advice and support for how to deal with the harassment, that CTV issue a cease-and-desist letter to HRC, clarification on whether there were any rules against showing a keffiyeh or Palestinian flag on TV, and clarification on whether leadership stood behind my coverage.

Each time, I was met with silence or indifference.

Then, several months after the broadcast, my story had quietly disappeared from CTV's website. The video report and copy had been unpublished without explanation or consultation and replaced with a short copy rewritten by a young, white male colleague. My name had been removed from the byline along with the quote from the protester. In doing so, CTV News breached its own Corrections Policy, which clearly states: "We do not, except in very narrow circumstances, unpublish articles or videos." This policy is echoed throughout most journalism outlets. Online journalism is a part of historical records and archives. While incorrect information should be corrected and clarified, keeping stories online reflects a commitment to transparency, accuracy, and fairness.

When I asked for an explanation, CTV management claimed that the story had been pulled to "protect (me) from criticism." But this was not protection—it was censorship and erasure, which is not typical in Canadian journalism. Normally, debates and lively discussion happen every day between journalists and the news desk. In fact, this story had been vetted by the editor and producer of the day. Usually, when a revision or correction is necessary, the journalist will be informed. Instead, in this case, CTV seemingly caved to a partisan group's pressure—an ethical breach that reveals a deeper crisis within the very belly of the beast that is the journalism industry.

What happened to me is what journalists and scholars call the "Palestine exception."

The Palestine exception

Journalists Pacinthe Mattar, Rahaf Farawi, and scholar Nahla Abdo have written about the “Palestine exception”—how discussions and activism supporting Palestine or criticizing Israeli policies face disproportionate censorship, backlash, and accusations of antisemitism compared to other political or human rights issues.[2] Inside Canadian newsrooms, it means that typical editorial standards do not apply to stories about Palestine.

For example, a Breach investigation by reporter Emma Paling revealed that CTV forbids its journalists from using the word Palestine and suppresses critical stories about Israel. Journalist Molly Schumann (a pseudonym) details CBC’s double standards on covering the war on Palestine and the war on Ukraine, ultimately leading to her resignation.[3]

This has a chilling effect on free speech and press freedom, making it difficult to hold balanced discussions or report critically on events. The “Palestine exception” is not just an abstract concept—it directly impacts the ability to report freely and uphold journalistic values of accountability and transparency. It illustrates how certain narratives are policed more stringently, often to the detriment of open dialogue and the pursuit of truth.

HonestReporting Canada: Weaponizing ‘oversight’

HonestReporting Canada portrays itself as “an independent grassroots organization promoting fairness and accuracy in Canadian media coverage of Israel.” In reality, it is a powerful and well-funded lobby group, mobilizing its 60,000+ supporters to harass journalists and overwhelm news organizations. HRC brags about having pushed for hundreds of corrections and retractions from newsrooms across Canada. This is not about correcting errors; it is about controlling the narrative.

Imagine if, instead of HonestReporting Canada, it was a white supremacist group targeting journalists and threatening newsrooms. Or picture a political party pushing for stories to be erased or rewritten because it did not like how its views were represented. Most of us would recognize

this as an attack on journalistic independence, an effort to bend the media to their will. It does not matter whether the group in question is a white supremacist organization, a political party, or a “media watchdog”—the result is the same: a betrayal of the public’s right to the truth and an erosion of journalistic principles.

HRC’s tactics have real consequences. The group has claimed responsibility for the firings of two Palestinian journalists, one of whom was on maternity leave at the time.[4] These are not isolated incidents. This is a concerted effort to suppress dissenting voices and maintain a narrow narrative in Canadian media.

On October 11, 2024, Justice Peace Advocates and Writers Against the War on Gaza filed a formal petition with the Canadian Revenue Agency, asking to audit HonestReporting Canada’s charitable status due to concerns that the organization’s activities may be in violation of Canadian law.[5]

CTV’s complicity in the erosion of press freedom

What happened to me at CTV is not an isolated case. HRC’s website lists a long record of news stories it has had “corrected”.[6] Meanwhile, newsrooms across the country are shrinking and fewer journalists are left to cover increasingly complex stories—weaknesses HRC can exploit.

In December 2023, HRC boasted that its members sent 50,000 letters to news outlets in just a few weeks, demanding changes to coverage they perceived as unfavorable to Israel. These mass email campaigns are not designed to encourage dialogue—they are meant to intimidate and exhaust already stretched newsrooms, strongarming them into compliance.

In his exposé on HRC, journalist Davide Mastracci notes HRC’s goal is simple: overwhelm publications until they make the desired changes. HRC even offers newsrooms a “deal”: if journalists agree to regular meetings and editorial adjustments, HRC promises to restrain its harassment campaigns.[7]

This is extortion for the purpose of editorial control.

The bigger picture: Canadian media under siege

Advocacy groups like HonestReporting Canada have found fertile ground in Canada's weakened media landscape. With fewer resources to fight back, newsrooms are increasingly capitulating to the demands of powerful interests, creating an environment where critical voices are silenced and important stories are erased to avoid controversy.

By deleting my story, CTV News not only silenced the voices of Indigenous land defenders, they also silenced my voice, the only queer, non-binary, person of colour in the Montreal office.

Diversity in a newsroom is not just a matter of representation; it broadens the scope of whose stories are told and how they are framed. It challenges biases that have marginalized certain communities and ensures that coverage reflects the lived realities of a diverse audience. When audiences see themselves represented on air—especially in ways that go beyond stereotypes—they are more likely to trust and engage with the news, recognizing that their experiences and voices matter.[8] This inclusivity enriches the news and builds a deeper connection between media and the communities it serves, fostering a more informed and engaged society.

Journalism has long aspired to be the backbone of our democracy—a truth-seeker, our mirror held up to society's face. Yet, too often, it has fallen short of this promise, constrained by the interests of the powerful. When news organizations bend to the will of groups like HRC, they become complicit in eroding the very principles they are meant to uphold. At a time when Canadians' trust in news is at an all-time low, this erosion of journalistic integrity is deeply troubling.[9]

I have been a journalist for 14 years and have always embraced criticism and debates on stories, believing they make us better storytellers. CTV's failure to stand by its journalist was a profound betrayal—not just of me, but of the public's right to a free and fearless press. In retracting the story, CTV sent a clear message: truth can be sacrificed for the comfort of power.

It was a year later, while on an educational leave, that I learned my story had been removed. When management informed me that it was done for my "protection," I made the decision to resign. Leaving CTV News was not an act of surrender but a stand for the principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity that journalism must reclaim and uphold. I could no longer work for an institution that had abandoned the very foundations of what journalism is meant to be.

If we continue to allow special interests to dictate what stories are told and how they are framed, we are not just failing our profession—we are failing our society. For journalism to live up to its potential, it must be independent, unafraid, and unwavering in its commitment to the public's interests. It must hold those in power accountable, even when the cost is high, and resist bending to the will of billionaire-backed pressure groups.

I still believe in the potential of journalism to be better, to be braver. I believe in a media that refuses to compromise on the truth, that stands with the vulnerable and challenges the powerful. It is time for a new era of journalism—one that does not shy away from uncomfortable truths but confronts them head-on. We owe it to the public, to our democracy, and to the next generation of journalists who are watching us.

It is time to rebuild what has been broken.

8

Covering Palestine Shouldn't Cost Anyone Their Job. Or Their Life.

By Pacinthe Mattar

November 3, 2024

This essay was submitted to the Dalton Camp essay award in January 2024. A version of it was later published in the Toronto Star, on November 23, 2024.

This essay is going to break one of the most pervasive, yet unspoken, rules in Canadian journalism: I'm going to talk about Palestine.

There's no way to write about journalism in 2024 without talking about the unbearable price journalists—the majority of them Palestinian—are paying for documenting Israel's campaign against Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants. I've lost count of the number of times I've repeated the Committee to Protect Journalists' finding that this is the deadliest conflict on record for journalists since they began their tracking in 1992.[1] Even more alarming is the suggestion that these journalists' deaths are no accident. The CPJ has said it "is particularly concerned about an apparent pattern of targeting of journalists and their families by the Israeli military."[2]

Israel does not dispute that its targets are deliberate. After the October airstrike that killed Al Jazeera's Gaza Bureau Chief Wael El Dahdouh's wife, daughter, son and grandson, Israeli News 13 reporter Zvi Yehezkeli said matter-of-factly in a live broadcast: "Generally we know the target. For example, today there was a target: the family of an Al Jazeera reporter. In general, we know."[3]

It’s been three months since Hamas launched an attack in Israel that killed 695 civilians, including 36 children, as well as 373 security forces.[4] Israel responded by vowing to “erase,” “destroy” and “flatten” Gaza.[5] They’ve largely succeeded. Days ago, the UN’s humanitarian chief declared Gaza “uninhabitable.”[6] 22,000 Palestinians, though likely more, have been killed.[7] Half of them are children.[8]

As for the journalists: prior to October 7th, there were an estimated 1,000 journalists in Gaza.[9] Now, according to the Palestinian Journalists’ Syndicate, over 100 journalists and media workers—that’s 10 percent of them—have been killed.[10]

It’s not lost on me that I’m breaking some “rules” as I write this impassioned plea saying Palestinian journalists—and their families—shouldn’t be killed for their reporting. In the halls of Western journalism, nothing is revered more than the chronically misapplied notion of objectivity: we are to be detached and unemotional. We are to remove ourselves from the story. But what happens when journalists are the story because they’re being killed at an alarming rate—and we’re barely speaking of it?

The mounting killings of journalists covering Israel’s war on Gaza is one of the biggest media stories of our era. If just one Canadian journalist was targeted for their reporting, we’d condemn it wholeheartedly without hesitation. Why are we not doing that now for our Palestinian colleagues?

It’s hard not to think that the very high cost Palestinian journalists are paying for getting their story out is no accident, because it is Palestinian journalists who are documenting, with devastating clarity, the toll of Israel’s actions. And as I and many others have learned even in Canada, there’s a cost to covering that story.

***

I am an Egyptian, Muslim, Arabic-speaking journalist who grew up between my birthplace of Alexandria, Egypt, Dubai, Saudi Arabia, and

Toronto. When the so-called Arab Spring erupted across the region, my ability to speak Arabic was highly sought out, catapulting me from barely employed, casual producer, to full-time, unionized staff employee at the public broadcaster.

When Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak resigned in 2011, I burst into a mess of tears. We had just recorded an interview with a protester in Tahrir Square for CBC Radio and could barely hear our interviewee's hoarse voice straining over the cacophony of Cairo's syncopated, blaring horns, the high pitched whistles, the roar of applause.[11] I kept my emotions in check until the interview ended, but tears flowed after I came out of the control room.[12] A colleague asked if he could record an interview with me about this moment's significance. Through tears, I said that watching this history unfold in Egypt, the country that my family and I left behind, made me think that perhaps I could go back, make it home again. That evening, the show aired a clip of my tearful burst of hope for my native Egypt, proudly claiming me as one of their own.

But as I found out, that kind of support has its limits.

In 2017, I produced an interview with a Palestinian-American journalist covering protests in Jerusalem. He talked about the harassment and intimidation he experienced at the hands of Israeli officers while reporting, linking it to a pattern of intimidation documented by organizations like the Foreign Press Association.

Out of the thousands of interviews I'd produced, this is the only one in my decade at the public broadcaster that didn't make it to air, pulled with no explanation, transparency, or editorial discussion.

Two years after this incident, I left the public broadcaster, sensing that I had hit a ceiling I could not crack. I was not wrong: after I left, I learned that the unaired interview with the Palestinian journalist had marked me as 'biased' by a senior manager who then opposed my attempts at advancing into a position of editorial leadership. It was devastating but affirming: I was not, then, imagining my feeling of having been sidelined by the same institution that once proudly held me up as an example of the feel-good, safe, low stakes 'diversity' Canadian media loves. There's a perception that

those who cover Israel and its government's policies and actions are "obsessed" with singling out Israel. But in my decade at the public broadcaster, I produced stories on alleged violations in almost every country in the region: Tunisia, Libya, Syria, my native Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia. I helped colleagues with their coverage too: as one of very few Arabic speakers in the building, I consistently received requests to translate videos of armed groups, of Syrian fighters, of ISIS or Da'esh, who I also covered. I covered the repression of Uighurs in China, the Rohingya in Myanmar, of Yazidis in Iraq.[13] I covered Canada's mistreatment of Indigenous peoples.[14] I covered police violence against Black people in the U.S. and Canada.[15]

My journalism was fueled by a value we like to say we hold dear: seek out the marginalized, excluded and oppressed, tell their stories with nuance and complexity, while holding the powerful to account. Working alongside some of our industry's best, we received awards for our sensitive yet hard-hitting journalism.[16] It felt like no topic was off the table—until my journalism focused on the actions of the Israeli government and military, especially as recounted by a Palestinian.

***

In 2020, I wrote about the hollowness of Canadian media's "diversity" in a feature essay for *The Walrus*, 'Objectivity Is A Privilege Afforded to White Journalists'.[17] It earned a National Magazine Award and paved the way for my acceptance into the Nieman Fellowship in Journalism at Harvard University. Getting to share this story in uncensored, painstaking detail the following year in Cambridge with a room full of the best journalists around the world—receiving their empathy, understanding and professional support—was one of the most validating and healing experiences in my journalistic career. I was emboldened by the power of what solid, fact-checked, journalism gave me the courage to speak about, the doors it opened to me. I vowed to continue the uphill work of improving our industry through critiquing it.

The last three months have laid bare just how much more work we have to do.

I'm painfully aware that every time I talk about our shortcomings when covering Palestine—and now, the alarming killing of Palestinian journalists—I lose "credibility." This fear of being seen as "biased" used to affect me. I bowed to it for too long, made the silent agreement to go along with not talking about Palestine in exchange for a 'viable' career in journalism.

No longer.

Last October, I heard Nobel prize-winning journalist Maria Ressa speak at Harvard University as part of the Nieman Foundation's 85th Anniversary celebration.[18] Addressing an auditorium full of journalists, she said: "Journalists are the punching bag when democracy is fighting for its life."

Today, it's Palestinian journalists who've become that punching bag—their blue press vests and helmets seemingly turning them into walking targets. Ressa advised us journalists in the room that day to face our fears, because doing so takes the sting out of them. That's what I hope to do: take the sting out of talking about Israel and Palestine. I'd like to create an environment in which we can address this elephant in the room without making Palestinian journalists feel that in order to "make it" in Canadian media, they have to pretend to not be Palestinian, or pretend not to care about their own fate.

***

Before I began writing this essay, I watched Wael El-Dahdouh, Gaza bureau chief for Al Jazeera, bid a tearful farewell to Hamza, his slain son, who was also a journalist.[19] I watched as Wael El Dahdouh cradled his son's limp, lifeless hand—partly blackened from the Israeli airstrike that took his life—the only part of Hamza's body visible from under his white burial shroud, over which lay his blue press vest. Crowds had gathered to bear witness to his grief.

And what a massive grief Wael El Dahdouh holds: over the last three months he and his family have been targeted not once, not twice, but three times: the first time, his wife, son, daughter, and grandson were killed by an Israeli airstrike while he unknowingly reported on it.[20] The second time, El Dahdouh was struck by shrapnel from an Israeli missile attack which killed his colleague, cameraman Samer Abu Daqqa, who died after bleeding for over five hours, Israeli troops preventing paramedics from reaching him.[21] Yesterday, El Dahdouh's son, Hamza, was killed when an airstrike targeted the car he and AFP stringer Mustafa Thuraya were in.[22] After every attack, El Dahdouh has somehow returned to reporting, steadfast in his commitment to bearing witness to Israel's assault on Gaza and its people, one that international law experts say could amount to genocide.[23]

I struggle to imagine the usefulness of an essay about Canadian media for Wael El Dahdouh and other Palestinian journalists in the face of such immeasurable loss. But one of our most basic roles as journalists is to bear witness. The least we could do is not only say this is happening, but ask why it's barely moved our journalistic peers in Canada.

As I address our industry with these questions and critiques, I must begin with myself: for too long, I have internalized the lesson that in order to keep my place in this industry, I must tip toe around this story. This essay, these words, are part of my continued attempt at undoing this self-censorship. I invite you to do the same, whether you still think it's "too complicated," or you've been intimidated into not asking questions about editorial decisions. It's time for us to confront the chill head on. I know it will not be easy. But I hope we can start by saying loudly, unequivocally, collectively, that journalists—no matter where they are around the world—should not be killed for doing their jobs. And that includes Palestinian journalists too.

Can we start there?

9

An Open Letter to Canadian Newsrooms on Covering Israel-Palestine

Signed by more than 500 Canadian journalists

May 14, 2021

"The Middle East is complicated."
"We need to hear both sides."
"Everyone has a lot of emotions about this."

These are just some of the excuses news editors have provided to Canadian journalists trying to cover the escalating violence against Palestinians.

The lack of nuanced Canadian media coverage of forced expulsions and indiscriminate airstrikes over the last three days, which have so far killed at least 137 Palestinians, including 36 children, has been disappointing. (This was the number of casualties at the time of writing this letter).[1]

As journalists, we cannot selectively choose which international human rights violations to report on.

This past year, Canadian media has reckoned with and acknowledged the lack of diversity and nuance in covering issues of human rights. The work has just started.

Our industry rallied to properly cover the Black Lives Matter protests after the brutal police killing of George Floyd, and the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on marginalized communities at home and around the world. We are learning to report on Indigenous experiences and issues

in a nuanced way that recognizes the long historical impact of colonialism. Why shouldn't Palestinians be afforded the same nuance?

According to the United Nations and countless human rights organizations around the world (including ones based within Israel), what's happening in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is a "grave breach of international law."[2] Some groups believe the attacks amount to an "ethnic cleansing."[3] It should be covered as such.

Dispossession is not complicated.

Violence against innocent civilians and children is not complicated.

Police aggression and state sanctioned racism is not complicated.

Journalists cover these issues all the time.

So why do we tip toe around coverage of Israel and Palestinians?

It's time for Canadian newsrooms to carry out the necessary due diligence and report on this region with nuance and context. For that to happen, Canadian newsrooms will have to first acknowledge their failings.

Anyone who has worked in a Canadian newsroom has encountered the reluctance or resistance to covering Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Canadian style guides still ban the use of the word "Palestine" in coverage; this has led to many corrections over the years.[4]

Racialized journalists have reported feeling overly scrutinized, or even censored, after every story pitch on this region. The unfair standard applied to these story pitches has only added to the burden they feel in diversifying Canadian media coverage.[5]

Unfortunately, newsroom leaders are skittish, fearing the deluge of complaints that often follows coverage. The deep reluctance to cover the ongoing nature of the Israeli occupation leads to urgent breaking news coverage that never includes the context that surrounds the issue. This content almost always centres around Israeli politicians and organizations and representatives of the Israeli government and military; rarely are Palestinian voices ever centred or featured.

A recent Al Jazeera column highlighted only two Canadian publications reported on a new Human Rights Watch report that found Israel was guilty of decades-long crimes against humanity against Palestinians: Canadian

Press and *The Globe and Mail*.[6] Mainstream Israeli groups tracking human rights abuses against Palestinians like B'Tselem have done the same.[7]

The CBC, Canada's public broadcaster, did not have any coverage on the HRW report. Derek Stoffel, the CBC's world news editor and former Middle East correspondent, explained the silence by saying that his newsroom did "not have the reporter resources on this day to devote to it."

We've all heard this before. But the deaths of innocent people anywhere in the world, let alone a highly contentious region where many Canadians have vested interest, merits in-depth, fair, and balanced coverage.

Our ask is simple: That all the tenets of journalism should apply to Canadian coverage of Occupied Palestinian Territories moving forward. Fair and balanced coverage should include historical and social context, reporters with knowledge of the region and, crucially, Palestinian voices.

Silencing Palestinian Narratives

10

Urgently Needed—A ‘Palestinian-Montrealer’!

By Muhannad Ayyash, *Al Jazeera*

May 25, 2021

On May 11, 2021, as Israel was unleashing its military machine in occupied Jerusalem and elsewhere, I was put into contact with CBC Radio-Montreal, who were looking for someone to interview to discuss the violent events in Sheikh Jarrah. After offering myself to speak on one of their programmes on the requested day of May 12, I was told that they would love to book me on the show.

Alas, the person had to be specifically, and I quote, a “Palestinian-Montrealer.” Apparently, it is their strict policy that all guests on the show had to be Montrealers. Moreover, I now had one hour to search for this specific sub-species of a Palestinian.

Fine. In 40 minutes, I found not one but two Palestinian-Montrealers, able and willing to be interviewed. I even checked with these two people. And they confirmed to me that every day they wake up, they think: “Wow, isn’t it great to be a Palestinian-Montrealer!” Only when those two words are combined, do they feel complete! Their combination is the defining feature of their very existence and the source of all of their expertise and knowledge about what was happening in Sheikh Jarrah!

Fantastic, CBC Radio-Montreal intimated. All within the hour too. We can’t believe it. Thank you.

The Palestinian-Montrealers I found were so kind that they cleared their busy schedules for the time slots that suited CBC Radio-Montreal, not just

for the on-air interview but also for the pre-screening interview. Schedules cleared. Preparations made. Wonderful.

May 12 comes and goes. But there is not so much as an email or a call from CBC Radio-Montreal to tell these Palestinian-Montrealers that they will not put them on the air or even pre-interview them.

This story is far from an outlier in the landscape of mainstream Canadian media, and indeed media landscapes across Europe, North America, Australia, and elsewhere.

Over the span of three days, between May 11 and 13, I found for CBC, Palestinians in Palestine, Palestinian-Canadian experts, Palestinian-Montrealers, and Palestinians in Palestine who are not a "journalist voice" but are just a "local voice"—whatever that means, but still, I found one. And every time I found one of these ever-more specific Palestinian sub-species, I was either simply ignored or told, no, today, we are actually looking for another sub-species. And on and on it went.

If it was not for the fact that this is structural concealment of settler colonial brutality and a form of harassment to the people who give up their time to find available Palestinian interviewees, as well as the Palestinians who dedicate hours of their time to prepare for the interviews for nought, these stories would only be comical.

Within media landscapes in Canada and beyond, there are of course courageous and conscientious journalists who are working extremely hard to break through the wall of silence and tell Palestine's story to their audience. They are everywhere. They are working within mainstream media, within CBC News, and some are creating their own media platforms and succeeding at it.

We all should support these journalists, both the independent ones and those who are working from within the mainstream. When they break through, when they put a Palestinian on the air and give them actual time to speak and explain the situation, when the journalist's own language in how they frame the events on the ground moves away from the misleading cliches of "both sides," "real-estate dispute," and "Israel's right to self-defence as a justification for everything and anything," and whatever else

government propaganda is disseminating, this is when we need to stand behind these conscientious and real journalists.

Write to your news stations. Tell them that you appreciated the work of such journalists. Ask them to do more. Help these journalists break the silence. Break the fear barrier.

Throughout the last two weeks and still going, young Palestinian journalists and activists are on social media providing a more accurate and comprehensive picture of what is happening on the ground than the entire Euro-American media landscape combined.

This does not mean that censorship is not happening on those digital platforms. It most certainly is. Instagram and Twitter accounts and Facebook groups are being deactivated, blocked, and censored. Therefore, these platforms will not serve as a panacea for these serious, structural, and foundational problems in the media landscape. Digital platforms are also a space that is policed and built to ultimately serve the powerful.

The CBC and other news organisations may think that they are sending us on a wild goose chase, running after Palestinian-Montrealers for phantasmic interviews. But we understand their games and tricks. We understand how they will respond to what I am sharing here. They will now point out how they have invited two, three, maybe even 10 Palestinians to speak on-air over the course of these days and maybe even coming weeks, and attempt to use that as an exoneration from these charges.

But we know and understand that inviting Palestinians of the various sub-species for a few minutes here and there will not really break through hours on top of hours of daily cementation of the narrative of powerful states like Canada, the U.S., and Israel (and there is almost no daylight between their positions).

And we also understand that the old guard at the CBC and other media organizations are on the wrong side of history. Any and all gains which will be made in the coming weeks, all of the breakthroughs that are happening already and will hopefully intensify, will happen despite entrenched state interests within the mainstream media. These gains are being made by people coming together both inside and outside of the mainstream media,

pushing these structures of power towards much-needed change. But much like the Israeli state, the mainstream media will respond to this pushback with structural violence.

In an open letter last week, some 500 conscientious, fair, and balanced Canadian journalists rightly called out “the lack of nuanced Canadian media coverage of forced expulsions and indiscriminate airstrikes” against Palestinians, making the following simple request: “That all the tenets of journalism should apply to Canadian coverage of Occupied Palestinian Territories moving forward. Fair and balanced coverage should include historical and social context, reporters with knowledge of the region and, crucially, Palestinian voices.”

And how does the old guard in the upper echelons of mainstream media respond? By banning some of the signatories from covering Palestine/Israel.

Let that sink in. A call for a more nuanced, fair, balanced, and actually legitimate journalism results in the punishment of those journalists.

And so indeed something is urgently needed, and it is not that ever elusive Palestinian-Montrealer. Urgently needed is a clear-eyed, open, honest, participatory, and deliberative public discussion across this planet on how structures of oppressive governmental rule are built and maintained with and through mainstream media institutions.

Never forget this: our story is not just a Palestinian story. It is the story of all peoples who are oppressed, killed, imprisoned, maimed, enslaved, colonized, and erased. It is the story of Indigenous struggles across Turtle Island, in Bolivia, Mexico, Chile, Australia, and beyond. It is the story of Black Liberation struggles across the entire world. It is the story of Kashmir’s struggle for freedom. It is the story of the yet unfinished struggle to dismantle the structures of economic and social inequality left by apartheid in South Africa.

It is the story of the struggle for freedom and democracy in Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and beyond. It is the story of all people struggling to overcome the yoke of postcolonial authoritarian states in Guinea, Uganda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq, Saudi

Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and beyond. It is the story of working-class struggles in Italy, Spain, Brazil, China, Egypt, Greece, the United Kingdom, and beyond. It is the story of the Jewish struggle against the destructive monstrosity that is antisemitism, which Europe created.

We are all the dominated in this world, which was erected in and through colonial modernity. The tactics and strategies that are used to silence and dominate Palestinians are the same ones that all oppressed people also face or will come to face, and that includes the structural violence that is practiced by mainstream media.

Nelson Mandela once said, “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.” True. But let me also add this: all of the people caught in those struggles above are not free. The Palestinian struggle for freedom is in fact also the struggle of so many people around the world for freedom. We either all get there together, or no one does.

11

Why the Term ‘Anti-Palestinian Racism’ Has an Uphill Climb to Recognition

By Shree Paradkar, *Toronto Star*

June 28, 2024

Don’t criticize Israel or Zionism.[1]
Don’t protest in front of a bookstore whose owner supports the Israeli military.
Don’t protest in front of a synagogue hosting an Israeli real estate sale of illegally settled land.[2]
Don’t call for a boycott.[3]
Don’t wear a keffiyeh.[4]
Don’t say “Palestine.”[5]

These are just some of the pressures faced, in varying degrees, by those who oppose Israel’s out-of-control war on Gaza. To support Palestinians is to be held in suspicion of antisemitism and sympathy with terrorists via uncharitable interpretations of words—which I can attest to—and actions.

Amid claims that such advocacy poses a threat to the emotional safety of some, corporations have moved to curtail social media statements, schools have shut down discussions in classrooms and governments have triggered mechanisms to control protests and even ban cultural items of clothing.

Palestinian feelings or Palestinian safety is rarely centred even as Palestinians reel from material losses of land and the lives of loved ones.

Those asking institutions to speak up against Israel, or to pressure Ottawa to economically and politically boycott it, are often met with either stony silence or penalties.[6] Actual antisemitism is rising, but advocacy for Palestinian rights is not antisemitism. Nor should supporters of Palestinian rights be blamed without evidence, as they so often are, for despicable acts of hate against Jewish people.

Perhaps it is not surprising then, that a society that frowns upon the usage of the word Palestine resists the term that describes the experiences of Palestinians worldwide: anti-Palestinian racism.

Against this backdrop, the Toronto District School Board—which has a long history of silencing Palestinian students and educators—recently included this form of racism in its anti-hate and anti-racism strategy, offering a sliver of hope.[7] Governments have still not included this term in their strategies. But naming this injustice is critical to reckoning with it. Without a reckoning, there can be no progress.

Lawyer Dania Majid was a child in Toronto when a family friend got into trouble at school for wearing a T-shirt that said “Free Palestine.” By the time she was in law school in the early 2000s, in the aftermath of 9/11, the student newspaper at Osgoode Hall Law School published an article that said there is no such thing as Palestinians. And soon after she and two Arab students started the Arab Law Students Association and hosted a falafel lunch, they received complaints of making Jewish students feel uncomfortable.

Today, the racist sentiments of Israel’s Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and the Israeli prime minister’s aide that “there are no Palestinians,” are echoed at counterprotests in North America.[8]

Earlier this year, a child in the TDSB was taken aside by the school principal after two girls complained about his hoodie that said “Free Palestine,” saying it made them feel unsafe. “So instead of her (the teacher) saying this is a teachable moment and asking them what exactly about his hoodie made you feel unsafe and why do you think he’s wearing it, she makes him feel like a criminal,” said Iman Annab, the child’s mother who is

part of Toronto Palestine Families that, along with Toronto Jewish Families, advocated for anti-Palestinian racism to be acknowledged by the TDSB.

This advocacy was only possible because of a 2022 report titled “Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations” that gave Palestinian-Canadians a framework to describe the smearing, the exclusion, the punishments that often follow engagement with Palestinian human rights.[9]

After an international hiring scandal in 2020 when the University of Toronto rescinded a job offer to an academic over her scholarship on Israel-Palestine, Majid, as part of the Arab Canadian Lawyers’ Association, prepared a submission into a review of the hiring.[10] After broad consultations with Canadians, Americans, Europeans, and Palestinians in Palestine, the association created a framework to describe the unique experiences that had elements overlapping with orientalism, Islamophobia, and anti-Black racism.

It describes anti-Palestinian racism as “a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames, or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives.”

Although it was not widely promoted, the framework was picked up and used across Canada, U.S., and Europe by high-school students, academics, lawyers, medical professionals, international scholars, and United Nations officials—and to a lesser degree by Palestinians in Palestine “because their form of anti-Palestinian racism can’t even compare to to the Western version,” Majid said.

“Anti-Palestinian racism is a specific form of racism that targets those who are Palestinian or advocates of Palestinian rights in order to suppress any challenge to Israel’s decades-long apartheid and occupation of Palestinian land and people,” she said. “We really wanted people to understand what we are experiencing is a systemic form of hate directed towards a community.”

Naming and including Black, Indigenous, and other allies in the framework was important. “We want to make sure that they’re protected as well, and that we don’t leave anyone behind in doing this,” she said.

The inclusion of anti-Palestinian racism in the TDSB equity policy means it will educate students on the issue, as well as other discriminations such as antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Parent Zaid Zawaideh, of Toronto Palestine Families, says the recognition “basically boils down to ‘none of us are free until all of us are free.’ We want everyone to live and to have the physical, psychological, and emotional safety in the TDSB school system.”

Such a basic aspiration. But such an uphill climb.

From Toronto Star. © 2024 Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. All rights reserved. Used under license.
https://www.thestar.com/

12

What Happened Outside Mount Sinai Hospital as a Pro-Palestine Rally Passed By?

David Gray-Donald, *The Grind*

February 14, 2024

While the NFL Super Bowl was underway on Feb. 11, 2024, Israel was intensely bombing and conducting a ground invasion of areas of Rafah, the city at the south end of Gaza where over one million people are taking refuge. Palestinians, told by Israel to go to Rafah to remain safe, were being killed by Israel's bombs, and images of the devastation were being viewed around the world, including by family members in Canada.

So on Sunday night, the Palestinian Youth Movement Toronto and Toronto 4 Palestine called an emergency rally in downtown Toronto for the next day, Monday Feb. 12, titled "Hands Off Rafah!"

That rally calling for an end to the assault on Rafah has since been denounced by Canadian politicians at all levels for what happened outside Mount Sinai Hospital, which protestors passed by for about 15 minutes in the course of the nearly four-hour rally.

Mount Sinai Hospital was founded in 1923 by Jewish immigrant women.[1] It remains an important institution for many in the Jewish community. The hospital is affiliated with the University of Toronto, and it accepts anyone as a patient. Staff do not need to be Jewish, and many are not.

During the rally, an individual dressed in a black Spiderman costume climbed a number of structures to wave a Palestinian flag over the crowd. Based on both photos and my own observations, this individual climbed on at least eight structures, including lamp posts, construction scaffolding, a statue, and several buildings.

His flag waving on Mount Sinai Hospital, in particular, caught local and then national attention, with numerous organizations and politicians claiming it was an antisemitic targeting of a Jewish hospital.

In this piece, I trace what took place and the responses that followed to show how a manufactured controversy was quickly amplified by the establishment media to discredit Palestinian solidarity.

What took place

The rally began outside the Israeli consulate. Later, the protest headed south from College St. down University Ave., taking up only the southbound lanes of traffic. The northbound lanes remained open, with some cars moving very fast, and protesters were occasionally in some northbound lanes.

At the intersection of Gerrard and University—across from Mount Sinai—a number of participants moved into the northbound lane to stop traffic. Large protests often stop traffic both ways.

Police then moved in to stop protesters from blocking the intersection. And, after a brief standoff and pause, the rally's marshals moved the crowd out of the intersection.

This is around the time the now-infamous 21-second video was taken of the person in the Spiderman costume climbing up the hospital entrance. The sub-section of the crowd visible in that video is hardly moving forward, which is something people have pointed to as evidence that the hospital was targeted.

However, there was no announcement made by organizers that the rally was stopping intentionally at Mount Sinai Hospital, and the crowd left the

area about 15 or 20 minutes after arriving there.

The aftermath

The protest has since been condemned by Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow, Ontario Premier Doug Ford, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, among many others.[2]

Here, I will briefly try to trace the chronology of those responses.

The first post critical of the rally that I can find is from Dr. David Jacobs at 9:50 p.m. on X, about two hours after the fact.[3] It is a grainy video showing people on—and coming down from—the entrance awning of Mount Sinai Hospital, with the crowd chanting a typical chant about intifada.

The description reads: "This is Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, Canada. The hospital was established because Jewish doctors had no place to train or work due to anti-semitism. Tonight a crowd is chanting for violence against Jews outside this place of healing. #antisemitism #BillC3 @SinaiHealth."

While some claim "intifada" means violence against Jews, it is more concretely and specifically understood as Palestinian resistance to Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands.[4]

At 10:25 p.m., Michael Levitt, president and CEO of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC), posted on X: "Tonight, the anti-Israel mob decided to pay a visit to Mount Sinai Hospital. I wonder who they were targeting? The patients, or the families there to comfort them? The nurses, docs or first responders saving lives? Or maybe just the Jews, because Mount Sinai Hospital, right?"[5]

Around three hours after the rally passed by, Dr. Raghu Venugopal posted a live video at 10:57 p.m. outside Mount Sinai Hospital, denouncing the rally for protesting on hospital grounds.[6]

By the next morning, Tuesday, Feb. 13, a number of accounts posted the 21-second video from spiderman4palestine's Instagram showing the

individual climbing on the Mount Sinai entrance. Dr. Jacobs posted it at 9:38 a.m. FSWC posted it at 10:53 a.m., and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) at 10:57 a.m. The framing of each post is that this was antisemitic targeting of Jews.[7]

Politicians and pundits also posted about it.

Marco Mendicino, a Liberal MP in Toronto and outspoken supporter of Israel and its current offensive in Gaza, retweeted Dr. Jacobs' grainy video at 7:44 a.m., adding: "Targeting Mount Sinai Hospital to incite intifada against Israel and the Jewish people is flagrantly antisemitic and undermines the health and safety of the patients and medical professionals who work there. The torrent of hatred against Jews and Jewish institutions must stop!"[8]

Mendicino's tweet was reposted at 8:30 a.m. by Debra Lyons, Canada's Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.[9]

She wrote: "We will be calling Toronto's Mayor and Chief of Police today to discuss how they will put a stop to this despicable targeting and attempted intimidation of Mount Sinai Hospital and Jews across Toronto and Canada. Leaders—at all levels—need to make clear that this is absolutely unacceptable. It is antisemitic, it is illegal and it is indecent."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posted on X at 12:49 p.m. Ontario Premier Doug Ford commented when asked at a press conference during the day, and the clip was posted by CTV at 1:19 p.m. Later that afternoon, Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow posted on X at 2:33 pm.

Numerous other politicians posted their denunciations of the protest throughout the day, such as federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh and Ontario Liberal leader Bonnie Crombie, who claimed, without presenting evidence, that protesters "infiltrated" the hospital.[10]

Major media headlines from Feb. 13 included:

Toronto Star: Protest outside Mount Sinai Hospital 'reprehensible' show of antisemitism: Trudeau, and Police investigating amid backlash over pro-Palestinian protesters outside Mount Sinai Hospital

National Post: Police investigating after Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital targeted by Pro-Palestinian protesters
Toronto Sun: LILLEY: Terrorist supporters harass hospital patients in Toronto, and WARMINGTON: Pro-Hamas supporters surrounding Jewish hospital a hate crime
The Globe and Mail: Toronto police to investigate pro-Palestinian march outside Mount Sinai Hospital
CTV: Mount Sinai Hospital protest: Police investigating
Global: Trudeau condemns protest at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital, calls it 'reprehensible'
CBC: Toronto police increase presence along hospital row after pro-Palestinian protest

Challenging the smear

The Toronto-based Jews Say No To Genocide Coalition took to Instagram to respond to Trudeau's tweet, writing: "This is anti-Palestinian racism. This is a distraction from genocide. Do not let our government and media stop us from having #AllEyesOnRafa."[11]

In response to FSWC thanking Trudeau for his statement on X, Independent Jewish Voices wrote in response: "Quickly, how was the hospital 'targeted,' and what actual damage to Jewish individuals and communities took place? From where we're standing, this 'vile display' looks pretty kosher. Antisemitism isn't just a rhetorical cudgel you can use against people you disagree with. It's not a specter summoned by the Palestinian flag. To combat actual antisemitism in Canada, we have to be clear about its meaning and impact. Toronto's protest was not antisemitic."[12]

Rally organizers Toronto 4 Palestine and the Palestinian Youth Movement Toronto released a statement on Feb. 14, co-signed by Jews Say No To Genocide.[13] It read, in part: "The protest marched from the Israeli Consulate for four hours, and concluded at Yonge-Dundas Square, passing many buildings and monuments across the city, with some attendees

climbing structures and scaffolding to raise the Palestinian flag at various points along the way: none of which were targeted. The narrative taken up this morning by Zionist institutions and Canadian politicians—including the Prime Minister, the premier of Ontario, and the Mayor of Toronto—suggesting that this protest was planned for and took place outside of a hospital, is patently untrue and encourages a racist and limited view of Palestinian liberation movements; we are not in the streets to target anyone, we are demanding an end to the genocide and occupation of the Palestinian people. It is astonishing that the various news outlets that attended and reported on yesterday's peaceful protest are today reporting on an entirely different set of fabricated events."

"We ask every Canadian politician who made false statements about what occurred at Monday's rally," the statement concludes, "as well as every media outlet that peddled the fabricated story of a 'Mount Sinai Hospital protest' to immediately retract and issue corrections to their stories so that the Canadian public can know the truth, and pro-Palestine protesters can re-focus our efforts on Palestinian liberation and the end to this horrific genocide."

As of May 2025, none of the politicians mentioned in this article who denounced the rally had retracted their statements or apologized.

13

Attacks on Press Freedoms Have Chilling Effects Far Beyond Gaza

By Sonya Fatah and Asmaa Malik, *The Walrus*

January 30, 2024

One of Palestinian filmmaker Bisan Owda's Instagram posts from early January 2024 begins with these words: "2:09 am. Can you sleep while this sound is in your head?" When the viewer unmutes the post, they hear a loud, unwavering drone that continues through the next two frames, time-stamped 3:08 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. "This is the unmanned plane and the buzzling sound is what we have been hearing for almost 20 years . . . We call it in Arabic, ZANNANA," Owda writes, using a word that means a buzzing sound or noisemaker. "This sound is loud because, they are multiple ones and so close! It's an Israeli war craft, it bombs, destroyes and kills." Sonic warfare, which causes post-traumatic stress disorder by paralyzing communities with fear, is the kind of thing that Palestinians are used to, and with Owda's documentation, the rest of the world can also now hear it.

More than 4.1 million people currently follow 25-year-old Owda's Instagram channel, where she posts daily accounts of human, cultural, and capital loss—the devastation of a tiny strip of occupied land described as an open-air prison by rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Over the past few months, Owda and other Palestinian journalists and media workers, including Plestia Alaqad and Hind Khoudary,[1] have broadcast the destruction and violence of Israeli attacks to millions of social media followers through their on-the-ground,

immediate, unfiltered, and personal video stories. (Alaqad left Gaza in November but continues to post on the crisis from afar.) Twenty-four-year-old photojournalist Motaz Azaiza once captured joyful images for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). With an audience of 18.5 million on Instagram and additional accounts on TikTok and Twitter, he kept telling the stories of his people until he made the difficult decision to evacuate in late January.

While the devastating statistics of the current Gazan crisis have been widely reported, the eyewitness posts Owda, Khoudary, Alaqad, and Azaiza share—often multiple times a day—have provided a human lens to audiences around the world. Since October 7, when heavily armed Hamas fighters carried out an attack on towns, kibbutzim, and military bases in southern Israel, killing more than 1,100 people and taking around 240 hostages, Israel has responded with an almost incessant campaign of airstrikes on Gaza. More than 26,000 people have been killed so far, including more than 9,600 children, according to Gaza's health ministry. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem too, more than 80 children have been killed since October. Human Rights Watch reported in December 2023 that almost 1.9 million people—85 per cent of Gaza's population—have been displaced.[2]

International humanitarian law prohibits the forced displacement of civilians except temporarily, but even if people can return, the daily attacks leave little to return to. In mid-November, 2023, a panel of United Nations experts called the Israeli bombardment of Gaza "a genocide in the making."[3] In December of that year, South Africa filed a case against Israel in the International Court of Justice at The Hague, alleging that its actions against Palestinians in Gaza have been "genocidal in character."[4] In its application, the South African government noted that it compiled its case based on numerous international reports as well as "eyewitness accounts from Gaza—including from Palestinian journalists on the ground—in circumstances where Israel continues to restrict access to Gaza by international journalists, investigators and fact finding teams."

Yet, even this significant public hearing at The Hague, live-streamed on January 11 and 12, 2024, for a global audience, has been treated differently by mainstream Western media outlets. Coverage of the first day of hearings—when South Africa presented its case—was either incidental or completely missing. By comparison, coverage of Israel's arguments was treated as important news, featured on front pages and livestreamed on news websites.

Given this landscape, independent journalists like Owda and Azaiza, whose online audiences rival those of some major broadcasters, have become indispensable to viewers and international observers. Despite wearing "PRESS" flak jackets, the kind worn by journalists covering active war zones and respected under the laws of war, they—as well as their colleagues working at news outlets—appear to have been targeted by Israeli forces.[5] At least 83 journalists and media workers have been killed in Gaza since October 7, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. (The government media office in Gaza accounts for more than 100 killed, but the discrepancy may stem from how the two organizations count journalists, and its proximity may result in an easier verification process.) By contrast, the CPJ reported that 67 journalists were killed around the world over the entirety of 2022, including 15 fatalities in Ukraine and 13 in Mexico. For further context, 71 journalists died covering the Vietnam war over 20 years, according to the Associated Press's Saigon bureau's tally of that period.

Journalists in Gaza are navigating a lethal obstacle course, including direct threats of assassination, with little access to water, food, and electricity. All this as they watch their houses being destroyed and their relatives, friends, and community members getting killed. In a November 2023 interview with The Nation, Al Jazeera Gaza correspondent Youmna El Sayed said that, despite these conditions, she and her colleagues are driven by a fundamental need.[6] "The only thing that's really keeping me standing, keeping me going to work every day and standing in front of the camera to speak, is the suffering that I'm seeing, the constant bombardments that never stop, the ongoing killing of people and civilians around me. If I let

these people down, who is going to speak out for them? Who's going to tell the world their stories?"

Notably, the majority of journalists killed by Israeli forces have been reporters for non-Western news outlets, including several Palestinian news organizations, such as Quds News Network, Al-Majedat Media Network, and Ain Media, as well as the Egyptian broadcaster Al Qahera News, the Turkey-based Anadolu Agency, and Al Jazeera Media Network, which is headquartered in Qatar. At a time when most major Western news organizations have all but completely shuttered their international bureaus and rarely parachute correspondents into conflict zones, the work of these journalists has been vital and precarious. The lack of a unified response from Western news organizations to this blatant attack on press freedom is shocking and evidences concerns about the diminished value of the life of a non-Western journalist.

The dangers of covering the Israel-Palestine crisis are not limited to front-line reporting alone but also manifest behind the scenes in North American newsrooms. Mainstream news stories with an intentional focus on Palestinian perspectives are rare. Instead, many news organizations remain mired in straw-man debates around objectivity, balance, and bias, often using these journalistic ideals strategically (and with double standards) to punish, fire, or push out reporters who have shown support for fairer coverage of Palestine.

The impact of the silencing and censorship of journalists within mainstream news organizations isn't limited to the coverage of the current crisis in Gaza. It raises significant press freedom concerns, including the chilling effect of self-silencing that bears on the accuracy of the public record. It alienates journalists who question the status quo. It has far-reaching implications for how journalism is conducted and whose stories aren't told. And it undermines the very standards newsrooms claim to be upholding.

Calls for greater integrity in reporting on the Israel-Palestine conflict have been the subject of two open letters from Canadian journalists, both of which we have signed. The first was released in May 2021, during a

roughly 10-day aerial bombardment of Gaza, which ended in a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, and the latest letter was published in December 2023.[7] Citing the systematic targeting of journalists in Gaza and the "chilling silence" of Canadian media organizations on the incredibly high number of journalist deaths, as well as internal newsroom decisions to penalize reporters who have expressed solidarity with Palestinians, the letter points out that "columnists and editorial boards who publish unequivocal support for Israel and dismiss civilian deaths as unfortunate collateral face no similar sanctions." The recent letter has been signed by almost 300 journalists, among whom were more than 20 at mainstream media outlets who signed anonymously.

Since October, two Palestinian Canadian journalists, Global TV's Zahraa Al-Akhrass and CTV Atlantic's Yara Jamal, have been fired for posts and comments they made about the ongoing crisis in Gaza that their news organizations considered to be violations of their editorial standards. In an Instagram post following her termination, Al-Akhrass said she was surprised that she received "not a single word of sympathy from anyone" in light of her personal connections to the region.[8] Instead, she said, some colleagues were "outraged" at her for sharing images about the war. Jamal, meanwhile, took to TikTok weeks after her firing to share her story. "There was absolutely no regard that I am witnessing my own people getting killed," Jamal said of the newsroom's decision to fire her. "Absolutely none." In evaluating whether journalists have violated their editorial guidelines, newsrooms should consider the toll of covering the crisis from afar, especially on journalists from the diaspora.

University of British Columbia professor Mary Lynn Young and Candis Callison, an associate professor currently on leave, write in their 2019 book, *Reckoning: Journalism's Limits and Possibilities*, that given the problematic history of journalism in the twentieth century, "the social location of journalists and news organizations on a North American terrain of settler-colonialism" needs to be recognized. This involves journalists' understanding of bias informed by the intersections of their individual and collective race and class identities. While this is an important journalistic

practice, often when journalists from underrepresented communities locate themselves in the newsroom in connection to stories, they end up opening themselves up to charges of bias. Newsroom leaders seem to pick and choose what constitutes lived expertise and what is advocacy.

In a recent interview with the podcast Longform, data journalist Mona Chalabi, who won the Pulitzer and gave it away and is of Iraqi descent, said of Western newsrooms, “I would wager there are fewer Arab journalists than there are journalists who have done Birthright”—the Israeli government’s program to bring diasporic Jewish youth on fully funded trips to Israel. Referring to *The New York Times Magazine* journalists Jazmine Hughes and Jamie Lauren Keiles, who resigned in November after they were reprimanded for signing a public statement published by a coalition called Writers against the War on Gaza, Chalabi continued: “Why is it that for you to sign a letter saying you support Palestinian human rights means you are no longer a credible journalist, your neutrality is under question? But if you have gone on an all-expenses-paid trip to Israel by the Israeli government with the stated intention of fostering better relations, better sympathy for the state of Israel, your objectivity is not under question?”

The ongoing “dehumanization” of Palestinians, as described by the United Nations high commissioner for human rights Volker Türk, has been reflected in media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict. In a letter sent to Al Jazeera in November, eight BBC journalists criticized their broadcaster for its uneven coverage.[9] On the one hand, its reporters sensitively portrayed Israeli suffering by sharing the names of individual victims, covering their funerals, and interviewing their families. “In comparison, humanising coverage of Palestinian civilians has been lacking. It is a poor excuse to say that the BBC could not better cover stories in Gaza because of difficulties gaining access to the [Gaza] Strip . . . This is achieved, for example, by telling and following individual stories across weeks. Little attempt has also been made to fully utilise the abundance of social media content from brave journalists in Gaza and the West Bank.”

In 2020, when Darnella Frazier recorded an eight-minute cellphone video of Minneapolis police officers choking George Floyd to death, she

committed what has since been widely acknowledged as an extraordinary act of journalism. The visual evidence of police brutality was too significant to ignore, and news outlets around the world used her footage to tell the story of police violence against Black people. The power of the images she captured, amplified by social media, was a catalyst for global anti-racism movements. The following year, Frazier was recognized with a special citation from the Pulitzer Prize committee for "courageously recording the murder of George Floyd, a video that spurred protests against police brutality around the world, highlighting the crucial role of citizens in journalists' quest for truth and justice." The journalistic force of Frazier's video asks us to consider whether professional standards and practices have evolved. With their global reach, the eyewitness reports from Owda, Alaqad, Khoudary, and Azaiza pose a serious challenge to traditional editorial gatekeeping and newsroom decision-making. But they shouldn't have to.

To understand how the journalistic concepts of objectivity and bias are enforced in newsrooms—and classrooms—it's important to first recognize that, for centuries, journalism in the Western world was a profession dominated almost exclusively by white men. Because there are no official certification requirements for employment as a journalist, the reinforcement of dominant cultural norms persisted as North American newsrooms continued to hire from within their social and professional networks. In recent decades, the needle of newsroom demographics has shifted when it comes to gender, but racialized journalists remain a minority. The Canadian Association of Journalists' 2023 newsroom diversity report, for example, shows that 75.5 percent of journalists in Canada identify as white and, more tellingly, only three out of ten newsroom leaders identify as non-white.

Over time, journalists have developed an understanding of objectivity as providing "both sides" of a story in order to be fair. But this is an inaccurate and flawed definition. In crisis situations, including the current Israel-Palestine war, there are clearly more than two perspectives; there are a range of views on statehood, identity, and occupation among Israelis, Palestinians, and the diaspora. In perpetuating a binary of two sides—pro-

Israeli and pro-Palestinian—and by presenting a homogenous Israeli point of view as the objective truth, news media are missing a significant chunk of the narrative.

As the Palestinian journalist Rahaf Farawi wrote in *Review of Journalism*, we see this limitation reflected in policies such as the CBC's language guidelines, which forbid using "Palestine," despite the UN's 2012 recognition of its pre-1967 borders and the approval of its non-member state observer status.[10] Canada, along with Israel and the U.S., opposes the motion. "The U.N. does not grant nationhood, and it remains premature to call Palestinian territories the country of Palestine," CBC guidelines read. Reflecting upon this official line in an interview, a former CBC employee told Farawi: "Historically, CBC has been so concerned about being branded as being too far on the left on everything, but including on foreign policy, and especially on Palestine, they feel that they need to establish their non-left credentials … In this case, it basically means repeating the government's official line."

In early January, The Breach reported that the CBC recently responded to Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission complaints that came from retired professor Jeff Winch, who criticized the CBC's use of evocative adjectives to describe the violence perpetrated by Hamas while employing neutral language around Israeli attacks.[11] This skews "the reader's empathy towards Israel and away from Palestinians—a further dehumanizing of an already downtrodden people," Winch wrote. The terms don't apply to the killings of Palestinians, argued the broadcaster's senior manager of journalistic standards Nancy Waugh, because Israel carries out its killings "remotely."

This kind of subjectivity in decision-making demonstrates that standards and practices aren't as institutionalized as newsrooms say they are. Instead, they seem to be enforced by the personal preferences of the editorial leadership, which privileges the perspectives of some journalists and not those of others. Over the past several years, while news organizations have launched multiple initiatives to diversify their newsrooms, traditional journalistic norms have not changed substantially.

This blinkered approach has led to mainstream news organizations rendering themselves increasingly less relevant and trustworthy to audiences, who can turn to other platforms for multiple on-the-ground perspectives—from Palestinian journalists like Owda, Alaqad, and Azaiza in this case.

The repression of Palestinian perspectives in news coverage ignores fundamental facts about the ongoing crisis. In the preface to the 2001 reprint of his graphic novel *Palestine*, journalist Joe Sacco wrote that despite the passage of a decade since its publication, nothing had changed on the ground; at the time, the second intifada was getting underway. “The Palestinian and Israeli people will continue to kill each other in low-level conflict or with shattering violence—with suicide bombers or helicopter gunships and jet bombers—until this central fact, Israeli occupation, is addressed as an issue of international law and basic human rights,” Sacco wrote.

Centring complex narratives isn’t easy. It’s often not a question of one or two sides but of multiple layers and divergent experiences. A journalist’s job is to articulate that complexity clearly without losing nuance. But research shows that younger audiences and members of underrepresented communities question the journalism profession and its authenticity today because of its tainted historical record of coverage of issues such as state violence against Indigenous and Black people. “The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging,” Palestinian American scholar Edward Said wrote in a 1993 essay collection, “is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them.”

The narratives that many Western newsrooms have thrust on the public have persisted in driving a myth about a simple historic binary in Israel and Palestine—Muslims against Jews. Yet there is little to corroborate this narrative. In the historical long view, Muslims and Jews have coexisted in relative harmony and with respect for one another, as have both groups with Christians of the land. Since October 7, however, the question of occupation has rarely been discussed or even raised in mainstream Western news

media. Journalists must situate the current crisis within the larger historical and present-day contexts, including global political and economic factors. Without this background, we are in danger of perpetuating fractured, dominant narratives and cementing them in the public record.

By comparison, the social media posts from reporters on the ground like Owda and Khoudary are dangerously temporal. Alaqad and Azaiza are no longer reporting from Gaza. The crucial eyewitness stories they and their fallen colleagues have posted since October 7 can be erased at the whims of technology giants who are not invested in preserving the proverbial first draft of history.

These open-eyed, young Palestinian journalists know how fleeting their impact can be. On December 31, 2023, the 86th day of Israeli bombardments on Gaza, with winter and disease creeping in and starvation a tragic reality, a once-hopeful Azaiza posted on social media: “You are all useless / Without shame watching us getting killed one by one / Will wait my turn to be killed by Israel / And believe me you are gonna do nothing.”

The Pressure Tactics of the Israel Lobby

14

Investigation: Journalists Denounce Pressure from the Pro-Israel Group HonestReporting Canada

By Loubna Chlaikhy, *La Converse*

October 22, 2024

Oct. 7, 2023—more than a year ago, attacks coordinated by Hamas killed more than 1,100 people. Hamas also took 251 people hostage, 97 of whom are still being held to this day. Following this assault, the government of Benjamin Netanyahu gave the Israeli army a mission: “eliminate Hamas.” The operations carried out in the Gaza Strip have so far caused more than 42,000 Palestinian deaths in a situation so serious that a UN Commission of Inquiry believes the Israeli government is responsible for “war crimes and crimes against humanity,” and Hamas for “war crimes.”[1]

In Canada, more than 8,000 km away, this tragedy is echoing. Here, some pro-Israel organizations are engaging in a war of a different kind: that of information. Among them, HonestReporting Canada (HRC), registered as a charity since 2019 in Canada, defines its mission as follows: “Israel is at the heart of a battle for public opinion, fought primarily through the media. To ensure that Israel is represented fairly and accurately, HonestReporting monitors the media.” The organization targets journalists, experts, and columnists, but also students and university professors.

Its director general, Mike Fegelman, believes that the Jewish community “was not doing enough” to denounce anti-Israel biases, and

assures that he wanted to “create a digital army for Israel” in an interview with Thej.ca.

Many journalists want to talk about their experiences with HRC, as long as they are guaranteed anonymity. This shows how sensitive the subject is for these media professionals, who say they are afraid of the consequences on their career, of being stigmatized, of being harassed or of being excluded from certain subjects as a result of their testimony.

After the publication of an article on a pro-Palestinian demonstration, Dan*, a journalist for a major Montreal daily, received several dozen emails. Every day, new messages denigrating his work were sent to him. “HonestReporting’s mode of action is to publish an article on their site indicating your name, media, and what they’re accusing you of... They encourage their thousands of subscribers to write to us, and they also send emails to your management asking for changes to the article. This is an approach that I don’t like at all, especially since the requests are unfounded... It only adds to the stress when we are trying to do our job,” says Dan. According to this journalist with a well-established reputation, “their aim is not really to make changes [in the articles], but to discredit the newspaper and the journalist by sharing this massively on social networks.”

Another journalist from the same daily is frustrated by this, writing, “I am very attentive to criticisms when they come from reputable sources who point out errors in my copy, which I correct if necessary—which did not happen on this subject—but I tend to ignore criticism that comes from such a marginal group defending radical opinions.” It is, however, becoming difficult to ignore this pressure, which is affecting more and more media professionals across the country.

In Ottawa, a journalist targeted by HRC who does not want to take the “risk” of testifying confided in an email: “I always respond to constructive, or at least polite, criticism that I receive. I question myself and if, at the end of the exchange with the person, with my management or colleagues from whom I ask for an external opinion, I think that I should make a change to my article, I am happy to do so. It’s the same for most journalists,” assures Sean*. “It can only work if we or a legitimate body are contacted before

launching a defamatory vendetta that can affect our reputation, even if the accusations are false. It seems to me that before accusing someone of antisemitism publicly and in packs, that's the least we can do," he insists.

Journalists victims of online pressure campaigns

Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail, La Presse, Montreal Gazette, CBC, *Le Devoir*, Radio-Canada, *Calgary Herald*, CTV, City News, *Edmonton Journal, National Post, The Guardian, Winnipeg Sun*... Every day, HonestReporting publishes two to eight "action alerts" on its website, aimed at one or another of these information actors. Print media, radio, television, everything is screened to "ensure that Israel is represented in a fair and reliable manner," says the HRC website. The organization says it wants to "question anti-Jewish rhetoric, especially when antisemitism is hidden behind a mask of anti-Israel criticism."

Journalists are also mentioned on the HRC website and identified with their photo, the logo of their media and the words "Action Alert." HRC claims to have more than 60,000 members, and encourages them to write to the targeted authors. The journalists we met liken this method to "propaganda" spread on HRC social networks.

"Since they publicly stigmatized me, gave out my email—and considering all the messages I received, I don't know what else they could do, so I prefer to remain anonymous. But I am happy that we are finally talking about it! I have heard a lot of colleagues complain about it, but no one really dares to speak up to oppose what they are doing," explains Helena*, a reporter for a television channel in Quebec.

A few months ago, Helena discovered that HonestReporting Canada published a post about a report she made during a pro-Palestinian demonstration. "I knew it would happen one day... Before, their actions were quite limited, but since October 7, we have all seen a strong mobilization on their part. Since I often cover these issues, I could not

escape them," says the young woman. Every hour, she receives new emails. "Some simply use the model proposed by HonestReporting, but others are personalized with messages like: 'Shame on you,' 'You are spreading Hamas propaganda,' 'You should be fired immediately,'" confides the journalist.

"Seeing all this, I didn't know what to do. I asked myself if I had done something wrong, if I should have done otherwise; it was unsettling for me. Finally, my colleagues reassured me that I had done a good job and that I had nothing to blame myself for. HonestReporting takes the smallest thing, twists it and throws fire at it, it's so ridiculous... Because now everything is antisemitic for them. Everything, really everything!" says an exasperated Helena.

To verify her testimony, La Converse watched the report in question and read the article published by HonestReporting Canada. HRC's concerns focus on elements that are beyond the journalist's control, such as a sign visible in the background with the word "Intifada" written on it, or on the media's editorial choices, in particular the "public interest" in covering a demonstration that the organization considers "hateful."

However, is it the role of a charity to suggest to the media what events to cover or not? "To say that there is no public interest, you have to fasten your hat to prove it! Especially since this is an event that takes place in the public arena, so it would be very, very, very difficult, even impossible, to prove that there is no public interest," analyzes Éric-Pierre Champagne, president of the Fédération professionnelle des Journalistes du Québec (FPJQ).

Helena has no plans to give in to pressure. "I think that, if we want to do our job properly and regain public trust, we have to stick to our ethical rules, and compromises are not possible. They want to silence the Palestinians and that is not acceptable. It is not acceptable for Palestinians, it is not acceptable for Ukrainians, just as it is not acceptable to attack Jews for any reason. It is not acceptable for anyone! They try to create fear and put their priorities first. And that shows how important it is for journalists to continue to do what they do," she said.

She assures that she can count on the support of her management, which has decided not to follow up on HRC's accusations for the time being. The organization asked the journalist to forward each email she receives from this organization in order to be able to react in case of threats.

In other newsrooms, however, things don't go as well.

"My report was deleted overnight"

"When they launched this campaign against me, I had never heard of them.[2] It was the end of 2021, and my inbox was awash with messages. I had to search for myself to find out that it was HonestReporting. It was finally a colleague who sent me their article," recalls Iman Kassam, a video reporter who recently left CTV News.

In her more than 14-year career, she assures that she has never experienced such relentlessness. She said she was all the more surprised that her video report had no connection to Israel. "It was a report on the Wet'suwet'en protests, which took place at the end of 2021. It had nothing to do with the Middle East, it was about Indigenous peoples, defenders of Indigenous lands," says Kassam. So how did a demonstration for First Nations rights end up in the crosshairs of HRC?

"In fact, one of the people I interviewed was wearing a keffiyeh and an orange flag that read: 'Children's lives matter.' It was a visual symbol of support and respect for the original inhabitants of this country, and that is what they are accusing me of," assures the journalist.

In its 2021 publication, HRC refers to this interviewee as a "pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel protester" based solely on his appearance. Here is the content of this protester's speech in the video: "The least we can do is stay in solidarity with them and show people that this land is rightfully theirs and that it will always be theirs, regardless of how many immigrants came here and no matter how many years have passed."

HRC's intervention earned Kassam several weeks of what she considers to be "online harassment." Emails mentioned, for example, that she "should

be fired” or that “people like [her] should not exist.”

Kassam says that after seeking the help of her superiors in order to know the procedure to follow to deal with all these messages, she was confronted with their silence. “I sent them the campaign that was launched against me and asked them to send the organization a letter of formal notice, because I believe that this is not acceptable, especially since I had already been a victim of cyberbullying before by young people on the extreme right—without help from them either—but I never got an answer,” she laments.

“Every time an email came in, I sent it to my managers. On several occasions, I asked my managers at CTV News four things: to send HonestReporting a letter of formal notice, to have an open dialogue to find out if there were any rules against showing a keffiyeh or a Palestinian flag on television, whether they supported my report, and, fourth, whether it was possible to ask management to have a conversation about what was going on. Again, I never got a response.”

Kassam says she had to deal with the situation alone. “It’s scary to feel that we’re going to have to go through this alone, under the pretext that it’s part of the job. No, it’s not part of the job! I have been a journalist for 14 years and I have only experienced this massive harassment while at CTV News. It is a business risk, but the company must take responsibility and protect its employees. The only thing they finally told me was that I could file a complaint—by myself, of course!”

The story does not end there: several months after the broadcast of the video report, Kassam discovered that it had disappeared from the television channel’s website. “It was removed overnight; you can’t find it online anymore. So the video was removed, the quotes were removed,” she says bitterly. “I was never informed about it, never asked if it was acceptable, never asked if it was what I wanted or needed, and never given the opportunity to rewrite it, even though I don’t see why I should have done it. It’s an incredible story... everything was done in secret.”

Through research using the Wayback Machine tool, a kind of web page archive library, La Converse was able to see that significant changes had been made to its site by CTV News. The name of the journalist, who shot

the report with a colleague, was removed, and all parts of the video that showed her or the protester with the keffiyeh were also removed. While it is difficult to date these changes precisely, it can be established that they occurred between Nov. 28, 2021, when the online report was first published, and Jan. 18, 2022, when the web page on which they appear was first archived. That's just a few days after HRC launched its email campaign targeting the journalist.

This was a major blow for the journalist, who was still working on CTV Montreal's editorial team when she realized it. "In doing so, CTV not only violated its own correction and retraction policy, but also silenced the voices of defenders of Indigenous lands. A lot of cases of silencing and erasing have occurred because of HonestReporting. It's incredibly unfair, and it really hits the heart of our democracy," the journalist said.

Kassam has since left CTV News to do academic research on how Gen Z Canadians assess the credibility and trust of news. Contacted about this report, which they removed from their site, CTV News has not responded to our requests to date.

The hummus of discord

In Toronto, another journalist also got into trouble after being targeted by HonestReporting.

"Samira Mohyeddin is the host of Unforked, a national radio program that analyzes the foods we eat to reveal their cultural and political dimensions. She is a journalist, documentary director and producer of the show The Current, on CBC Radio One, which has received numerous awards.... For over 16 years, Samira has co-owned and operated a restaurant and market in Toronto's Queen West neighbourhood with her brother and sister. It is by combining her two passions, food and journalism, that she remains curious, well-informed and well-nourished."

These few lines, gleaned from the Canadian public broadcaster's website, summarize the career of the woman who resigned in November

2023.

Samira Mohyeddin is one of only two journalists, along with Kassam, who did not request anonymity as part of this investigation.

She was targeted by HRC as early as 2018 for a talk show bringing together young Israelis and Palestinians on the theme of the "path to peace." "These were children who were born in this conflict. They had never experienced anything but the occupation, you know, and it was a great discussion. In fact, we received messages from across Canada, from people telling us how wonderful it was to listen to Palestinians and Israelis talking like this. But HonestReporting Canada didn't like that and sent emails to my management," she recalls.

Then, in summer 2021, an episode of Mohyeddin's weekly podcast, Unforked, garnered her a new wave of messages on social networks. At the heart of the debate: hummus, this Middle Eastern dish whose star is the chickpea. The journalist's guests—a sociologist from an Israeli university, a Palestinian actress, a young Canadian-Lebanese woman who uses her grandmother's hummus recipe and a Palestinian activist journalist who has written a book on cooking in Gaza—chatted for nearly 30 minutes. The discussion focused on their relationship to this popular dish whose family recipe is passed on from generation to generation, on their opinion on hummus variants with different non-traditional flavours and on the disputes over the authorship of hummus. In the last quarter of the podcast, the debate focuses on the fact that Israel has declared hummus to be a national dish and the political implications of such an initiative.

The same day, HRC published an "alert" and asked its subscribers to launch an email campaign. The organization believes that "the series portrayed Israelis as 'colonialists' and occupants of Indigenous Palestinian land, responsible for the erasure of so-called historic Palestinian communities." It criticized the presenter for having "characterized the revival of Israel in 1948 as a 'Nakba', a provocative and hateful term that means 'disaster' in Arabic." According to the organization, "this CBC program denied Jewish independence in the Land of Israel and described

the creation of Israel as a disaster, not as the miracle and blessing that it really is."

These are accusations that Mohyeddin rejects: "My show is about gastronomy. It's not a news program where I need to be balanced, it's a show about food! It was a bit absurd, but you know, that's what HonestReporting does, which has one of the most Orwellian names you can imagine, because honesty is probably the last thing that characterizes them!"

Initially, CBC's senior current affairs director, Alison Broddle, told HRC that no mistakes had been made. "We ensured that Israeli and Palestinian perspectives were represented by knowledgeable guests who had the opportunity and the necessary airtime to express their opinions and openly agree or disagree with each other," Broddle says in the CBC ombudsman's report.

Not satisfied with this response, HRC then turned to CBC ombudsman Jack Nagler, an independent mediator between the public broadcaster and its listeners. In a detailed report, he considered that "for a listener prepared by the introduction to learn more about the 'debate' [i.e. the origin of hummus], it was not a balanced program," but he rejected all the other grounds of complaint submitted by HRC, recalling that the guests, who are not journalists, "were perfectly entitled to have these opinions and to make these statements."[3]

About the term "Nakba," the ombudsman specified the following: "It was not Samira Mohyeddin who described the creation of Israel as a disaster. It was clearly an attempt to define a word that many listeners may not be familiar with. I think CBC was right to do it." Nagler concluded that the episode was in violation of CBC policy on the grounds that the introduction of the subject might suggest to the audience that it would be a different debate.

"If you read the report from the ombudsman, you will see that he does not agree with any of their criticisms and that in the end he throws a bone at them to calm them down. I didn't like to discover that, I don't think he was right in his assessment and I found it ridiculous," says Mohyeddin.[4]

For its part, HRC called the decision a “victory” on its website and social networks: “It is important to note that the Ombudsman’s report testifies to the power and impact of HonestReporting Canada subscribers, who denounce the problematic coverage of anti-Israel events and who have contributed to raising the awareness of CBC management about this problematic episode.”

‘We end up not proposing certain topics anymore’

Mohyeddin believes that this type of situation pushes some journalists to self-censor. “I left CBC, but it’s not because of this particular story. I left to do something else and I’m glad I’m not there right now because I wouldn’t be able to handle that. Today, I have the freedom to tell the truth, which is much more important to me than a salary. I did not do journalism to lie or to advertise a country, I am not paid for that,” she says. “Talking to you today is taking a risk, and I don’t think that many of my colleagues will speak openly. But it’s important,” Mohyeddin says bluntly.

According to the first Canadian survey report on online hate against journalists, conducted by Ipsos in 2021, 31 per cent admit to having reduced coverage of certain topics after being harassed, 23 per cent say they do not disseminate certain information, and 15 per cent admit to having abandoned article topics.[5] These figures provide a glimpse of the harmful effects for the profession of the strategy adopted by HonestReporting Canada.

“Managers say all the time that they don’t want to deal with hundreds of emails, which is something that invariably happens in these types of situations—and HRC knows that very well by doing so,” says Mohyeddin. “What happens is that we end up not offering certain items. You end up not offering certain topics because you tell yourself that they don’t want to deal with emails, and you don’t want to be seen as the journalist who is always a

headache. I never thought about it in those terms, I didn't care, but I know that's what happens to a lot of journalists."

"I really feel like CEOs think a lot about what people are going to say and are sacrificing the truth on the altar of fairness when it comes to Israel and Palestine," she continues. "It's obvious!"

Asked about this specific case, Chuck Thompson, director of public affairs at CBC, said the following: "The ombudsman's work is independent of CBC News, which respects his opinion and has no comments to make on his revisions. The CBC News correction process does not depend on criticism or requests for corrections made by anyone. If we learn and confirm that an error exists on our platforms, we correct it. However, if a person or organization claims that an error exists and after verification we determine that there is no error, we simply respond to complainants that there is nothing to correct. There are no negotiations." As for ombudsman Nagler, he told us he was "not in a position to be able to participate" in our reporting.

CBC News Director Tracy Seeley answered our question about the pressures exerted by HonestReporting and how to defend journalists at a conference organized on Aug. 27, 2024, by the Center for Freedom of Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University on the theme "The Battle to Cover the War in Gaza."

"We tell our journalists that they just need to focus on accuracy and having accurate information and don't have to worry about complaints… It's difficult when people are targeted directly by groups, and I would say we're still trying to figure out how best to protect our journalists," she said.

From 2022-2023 to 2023-2024, the number of complaints sent to CBC increased by 45 per cent, according to the annual report published by Nagler last March. "In total, I received 1,882 complaints about one aspect of CBC's coverage of this topic [the situation between Israel and Gaza]. That's almost 40% of the entire year's correspondence," he notes. "The messages I've received reveal a profound divide in how Canadians perceive CBC events and coverage. Around 55% of the complaints felt that CBC was unfair to Israel," the ombudsman said.

Journalist organizations denounce HonestReporting Canada

Faced with these testimonies, with the attitude of some editors who seem to be gradually giving in to the pressures of HonestReporting Canada, what is the position of the federations and organizations that represent the profession?

“It’s okay to be critical of the work of the media. I have no problem with that, the media is not perfect and we are in a democracy. But in this specific case, we are well beyond criticism. When you put a photo of a journalist, you send out their email address, and then you invite people to harass them, you are downright intimidating,” said FPJQ president Champagne. “I denounce these actions on behalf of the federation. I find it extremely worrying that an organization like this exists.” He assures that the FPJQ is keeping an eye on the actions taken by HRC against journalists in Quebec and says he is considering the responses that the organization could give to these practices. “Obviously, we must resist these pressures, we must continue to do our job as journalists,” he says.

At the Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ), President Brent Jolly has collected numerous testimonies from journalists targeted by the pro-Israel group. He is also very critical of the methods used by HRC. According to him, they represent “serious threats.”

He believes that, since October 7, the situation in Israel and Gaza has transformed into “a form of information warfare.” According to him, HRC “uses its community of followers like an army—if you can call it that—in order to advance its priorities... You know, I’m not necessarily really worried about what HonestReporting puts on their website, I’m more worried about people and what they do after the fact. It’s not democracy, it’s dictatorship.”

His Quebec counterpart, Champagne, shares this sentiment: “These are attempts to intimidate and muzzle, in a way, which can have pernicious effects in the long run. The objective is to ensure that these subjects are no longer covered by the media. This can lead to a form of self-censorship,

which is not desirable, and at the same time shows that such tactics can work."

He wants to emphasize that antisemitism is a reality in Canada. "The idea is not to deny that, but you also have to be able to discuss certain topics," Champagne says. "There are voices critical of Hamas, there are voices critical of some Palestinian actors, and then there are voices critical of the Israeli government, so all of this has to exist. It is the job of journalists to give a voice to these people."

To prevent self-censorship from becoming widespread, these two representatives of the profession urge the media to take their "responsibility." "Generally, when a journalist works for a media [outlet], he must assume the responsibility of defending his newspaper. We also know the difficult situation of the media in Canada... It may not be their priority to invest thousands of dollars in legal fees and court fees. But we are doing work that is constantly in the public eye, important and difficult work. Therefore, it is essential to provide the means, the tools, to do the job and also protect journalists," says Champagne.

CAJ's Jolly assures that he is working on the issue: "So right now I am looking to upgrade digital security so that journalists are protected. The aim is for us to be ready to face these problems in 2025, which is going to be a year rich in elections, so with a lot of pressure. If we are not prepared for these challenges, then I will have failed in my work." This is the promise made to the entire profession.

Ongoing responses

Seen from Israel, the situation also worries some media actors. Gideon Levy, an Israeli journalist and author who writes a column in the newspaper *Haaretz*, answers our HonestReporting Canada question directly from Tel Aviv: "The Israeli and Jewish propaganda system made a very sophisticated and strategic decision a few years ago—it hasn't just begun—to label any criticism of Israel or the occupation as antisemitic. And it's a huge

success!... The International Court of Justice is antisemitic, the judges are antisemitic, the media are antisemitic... I think it has become a problem of freedom of expression and democracy in Europe, the United States and Canada," he writes.

"Most people who criticize Israel are thoughtful people, and labeling them as antisemites is a strategy to silence them. I saw the media give in. They are paralyzed by these accusations and by the fact that they may be accused of antisemitism. I think it's time to say that no one will tell us who is antisemitic and who is not," insists Levy.

Echoing these considerations, J-Source, a Canadian platform dedicated to journalism and media news, invited Canadian journalists targeted by HRC to report these threats using an online form, nominatively or anonymously.[6]

"HRC is committed to launching slanderous and bad faith attacks against groups of media professionals and others in order to derail their work and tarnish their reputation. As a newsroom specializing in press freedom research, we closely monitor the consequences of targeted harassment campaigns and their impact on journalistic work and freedom of expression," explains Steph Wechsler, editor-in-chief of J-Source and of the Canada Press Freedom Project. This project collects data on the nature and prevalence of press freedom violations experienced by media workers in 12 categories, including online threats.

HonestReporting Canada has in fact labelled The Breach as being a "so-called 'independent media'" outlet that is "anti-Israel" on its website on Oct. 15, 2024. "This is part of a long-standing HonestReporting model that baselessly defames critics of Israel, and so it won't deter us from doing quality journalism," said Martin Lukacs, editor-in-chief of The Breach. "It is distressing that they say they have contacted government officials to deprive us of eligibility for the small amount of public funding we receive. But as we do award-winning and credible journalism, we doubt that their lobbying will have any impact."

At the same time, two associations, Just Peace Advocates and Writers Against the War on Gaza Toronto (WAWOG TO), announced they are filing

an official complaint with the Canada Revenue Agency against HonestReporting Canada on Oct. 11, 2024. They are calling for an audit of the charity because they believe that “its activities could be contrary to Canadian law,” according to their press release.[7]

These associations want the federal agency to remove HRC’s charitable status, as was the case for Jewish National Fund Canada and Ne’eman Canada on Aug. 10, 2024, following a similar audit. This will be a case to follow.

On Aug. 5, Aug. 19, and Oct. 8, 2024, La Converse sent requests for comment to four members of HonestReporting Canada: Executive Director Mike Fegelman, Digital Director Rick Firth, Regional Director for Quebec Rick Firth, Regional Director for Quebec Jade Firth, Quebec Regional Director Jade Levitt and Deputy Director Robert Walker. Despite three email reminders, several phone call attempts over the past few months, and a message sent to Mike Fegelman on LinkedIn, to date we have received no response to our requests.

* *The first name has been changed to ensure the anonymity of the witness*.

15

Postmedia Called Out for Publishing Israeli Propaganda as ‘News’

By Jeremy Appel, *The Maple*

December 8, 2023

The advocacy group Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is taking Canada’s largest newspaper conglomerate to task for publishing articles from a right-wing pro-Israel news site disguised as news wire stories across its chain.

Soon after the October 7 attack led by Hamas on southern Israel, *National Post*, Postmedia’s flagship paper, began running stories on Israel and Palestine either from the Jewish News Syndicate (JNS) or with files from it, alongside stories from traditional international wire services, such as the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters.

The JNS stories, which typically rely exclusively on Israeli government sources and do not mention Palestinian civilian casualties, have been republished in Postmedia news outlets, including *Ottawa Citizen*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Calgary Herald*, *Edmonton Journal*, Regina’s *Leader Post*, and Saskatoon’s *StarPhoenix*, among others.

CJPME told The Maple it filed a formal complaint with the National NewsMedia Council (NNC) against Postmedia over its use of the pro-Israel source on December 4, 2023.

In some instances, JNS articles are republished with added context and quotations from other news outlets. In these cases, the content is attributed

to “National Post News Services” or “National Post Wire Services.”

Jewish news outlets have historically used wire stories from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, which was founded in 1917 as the Jewish equivalent of the AP. JNS was established in 2011 to provide an explicitly pro-Israel perspective.

Russel Pergament, founding publisher of the JNS, criticized his competitor for being insufficiently supportive of Israel in its reporting, particularly when it came to Israel’s attack on the Mavi Marmara, a Turkish aid ship that sought to breach the blockade of Gaza in 2010.

“Their coverage of that indicated that some sources say the Israelis started the violence, other sources state the militants started the violence. There comes a time when you need to stand up for Israel when the facts and the truth are on our side,” Pergament told the American Jewish news outlet The Forward in 2013.[1]

‘A mouthpiece for the Israeli military’

Jason Toney, CJPME’s director of media advocacy, told The Maple that *National Post* first published an article solely attributed to the JNS on October 13, 2023.

Around this time, he began to notice “these very one-sided articles coming out that were basically a mouthpiece for the Israeli military, were just repeating their claims without any skepticism or challenge, and totally omitting any concerns of Palestinians or their supporters.”

It is Postmedia’s prerogative whether they want to run articles of this nature, Toney emphasized, “but the biggest issue from a journalistic principles and standards perspective is that it’s being marked as news … not as opinion.”

“That’s an extremely important distinction. In terms of all major Canadian journalistic standards, guidelines, it’s a clear violation,” he added.

The Canadian Press wire service’s news principles read in part: “Stick to the facts without editorial opinion or comment. Reporters’ opinions are

not wanted in copy. Their observations are. So are accurate backgrounding and authoritative interpretation essential to the reader's understanding of complicated issues."[2]

The first complaint to *National Post* editors about running JNS "advocacy polemics" as news stories came on October 17, 2023, from CJPME director of strategic operations Dan Freeman-Malloy, who asked that JNS copy "be dissociated from your news reporting and clearly marked as opinion."

Freeman-Malloy described the JNS as a "pro-Israel think tank that produces hard-line opinions behind a 'National Post Wire Service' disguise."

"This is a gross betrayal of public trust and a blow to the credibility of journalism nation-wide," he said.

Reports omit key details

CJPME's Media Accountability Project (MAP), which Toney runs, sent out an alert about a JNS story that ran in the Post's online edition on October 31, 2023, about an Israeli airstrike on the Jabalya refugee camp. The JNS story was headlined: "Hamas leader who directed Oct. 7 massacre of Israeli civilians is dead: IDF."

The lede paragraph for the story, which didn't mention Jabalya at all, read: "Israel struck over 300 Hamas targets and killed 'numerous' terrorists in the Gaza Strip over the past 24 hours, including a senior commander, the Israel Defense Forces said."

By contrast, the headline for the same story in Reuters was: "Israel strikes dense Gaza camp, says it kills Hamas commander."[3]

Its lede read: "Israeli airstrikes hit a densely populated refugee camp in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, killing at least 50 Palestinians and a Hamas commander, and medics struggled to treat the casualties, even setting up operating rooms in hospital corridors."

The AP headline read: “Israeli airstrikes crush apartments in Gaza refugee camp, as ground troops battle Hamas militants.”[4]

Its lede read: “A barrage of Israeli airstrikes leveled apartment buildings in a refugee camp near Gaza City on Tuesday, with rescuers clawing through the destruction to pull men, women and children from the rubble. Israel said the strike, which targeted a senior Hamas military leader, destroyed a militant command center and an underground tunnel network.”

The JNS article in question, CJPME said, repeated unverified claims that Abu Anija was behind the October 7 attacks, failed to mention Israeli attacks on civilian infrastructure, referred to the occupied West Bank by its biblical name, “Judea and Samaria,” and included no Palestinian or pro-Palestinian perspectives.

The piece also ran in the November 1, 2023, print edition of *The Leader Post*, which added three paragraphs from a *Washington Post* story detailing the damage the airstrike did to the refugee camp.

The MAP alert urged CJPME supporters to complain to *National Post*’s editor-in-chief, Rob Roberts, and managing editor Aileen Donnelly, as well as the author of the JNS piece, Joshua Marks.

National Post editors did not acknowledge any of CJPME’s complaints about the JNS, but Marks did, insisting that Israel abides by international law and blaming civilian casualties on Hamas.

“I couldn’t respond because I had to rush to a bomb shelter in Tel Aviv because genocidal Hamas terrorists in Gaza launched more of the 8,000 plus rockets at us since their mass slaughter of 1,400 Israelis on October 7,” Marks wrote in a Nov. 1, 2023, email to the CJPME supporters who complained.

“Israel … works within the framework of international law and does everything possible to avoid civilian casualties who sometimes get hit because the Hamas war criminals commit war crimes by using them as human shields as they fire rockets at Israel from hospitals, mosques, schools and UN buildings in Gaza.”

“Maybe you should write about that.”

Military claims presented as fact

It's not just CJPME that has complained to Postmedia newspapers about JNS content being presented as news reporting.

Regina resident Sally Mahood wrote a letter to *The Leader Post* to express "disappointment and incredulity" that the paper ran a November 15, 2023, JNS article about Israel's storming of al-Shifa Hospital. The article presented unsubstantiated Israeli claims that there was a Hamas command and control centre beneath the facility as fact, Mahood wrote.[5]

The same 500-word piece also ran in the print editions of *National Post*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Calgary Herald*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver's *The Province*, *Windsor Star*, Saskatoon's *StarPhoenix*, and *The London Free Press*, according to the Canadian Newsstream database.

"Both the United Nations and human rights officials on the ground have denied these claims," Mahood wrote. "The Jewish News Syndicate is clearly a partisan pro-Israeli outlet. Propaganda is not news."

On November 24, a 450-word JNS story on the arrest of al-Shifa Hospital director Muhammad Abu Salmiya, which referred to "weapons and other terrorist infrastructure" inside the hospital, was reprinted nearly verbatim in the print editions of *The Calgary Herald*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Kingston Whig-Standard*, *Leader Post*, *Montreal Gazette*, *London Free Press*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *The Province*, *StarPhoenix*, *Vancouver Sun*, and *Windsor Star*, according to Canadian Newsstream.

The piece was attributed to "National Post News Services" rather than solely JNS, due to the addition of remarks from Qatari government spokesperson Majed al-Ansari, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Jihan Qanan, a resident of Khan Younis in southern Gaza, regarding the temporary pause in fighting that began that day.

The front pages of *The Journal* and *The Herald* teased the story with the headline: "Tunnel network uncovered: Hamas operating in, under hospitals." On the front pages of *The Leader Post* and *Gazette*, it was: "Gaza strip: Hamas tunnel network found under Al-Shifa hospital."

During last month's seven-day pause in fighting when Israel and Hamas swapped hostages, *National Post* ran JNS content that repeatedly referred to the freed Palestinians—the majority of whom were children and/or prisoners who had not been charged with any crime—as "terrorists."[6]

Politics of wire services

Karim H. Karim, a professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication, told The Maple that understanding the "regimented" political uniformity of Postmedia's newspapers requires looking back to the days when many of those newspapers were owned by Southam.

The company, which owned *The Montreal Gazette*, *Calgary Herald*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Ottawa Citizen*, and *Vancouver Sun*, among other titles mentioned above, operated its own sort of wire service, through which newspapers across the chain were free to publish each other's stories.

"It had its biases, of course, but it was a fairly respectable news agency," Karim said.

In 1996, Southam was purchased by Hollinger Inc., the company founded by Conrad Black, and which owned *The Chicago Sun-Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Jerusalem Post*.

Black, who had a preference for running international news stories from the conservative *Telegraph* rather than AP or Reuters across the Southam papers, established *National Post* in 1998 as a more dependably conservative alternative to *The Globe and Mail*.

In 2000, Southam's papers were sold to CanWest, which was owned by former Manitoba Liberal Party leader and philanthropist Izzy Asper, who Karim noted "did not make any bones about having a very strong editorial position on specific issues, particularly Israel."

"It was very clear that all the newspapers under [CanWest's] ownership would run editorials written by head office in Winnipeg," he said. "It was anomalous. It had never happened before under media concentration by various corporations."

Montreal Gazette publisher Michael Goldbloom resigned in October 2001 to protest the company's interference in the newspaper's editorial decisions. This included forcing the *Gazette* to run an Aug. 11, 2001, unsigned editorial pre-emptively defending Israel's aggressive response to a suicide bombing at a Jerusalem pizzeria. "Nothing is excessive in the face of an enemy sworn to your annihilation," it read.

At the same time as it was forcing pro-Israel opinion onto the pages of its local newspapers, CanWest's Winnipeg office suppressed critical voices.

In January 2002, head office quashed a column by *Indigenous StarPhoenix* and *Leader Post* columnist Doug Cuthand, who likened the plight of the Palestinians to Indigenous Peoples in Canada.[7]

CanWest's practice of replacing words like "insurgent" or "militant" with "terrorist" in wire stories on the Iraq War and Israeli-Palestinian conflict was criticized by AP and Reuters, with the latter asking in 2004 that the company refrain from publishing its reporters' bylines for their own safety.

"Our editorial policy is that we don't use emotive words when labeling someone," Reuters global managing editor David A. Schlesinger told *The New York Times*.[8]

"Any paper can change copy and do whatever they want. But if a paper wants to change our copy that way, we would be more comfortable if they remove the byline."

An unsigned *National Post* editorial said wire services' reluctance to use the "terrorist" label tainted their stories with the "misleading gloss of political correctness."

Dominant discourse

After CanWest went bankrupt in late 2009, its newspapers were sold to the newly established Postmedia Inc., with the "residual effects" of Asper's directives remaining under the new ownership, Karim explained.

In 2018, Postmedia senior management, in the words of journalist Sean Craig, ordered “all of its papers to shift to the political right, in an unprecedented, centralized fashion.”[9]

But, Karim emphasized, ownership can’t control every single thing newspapers publish, since that would be too monumental a task. It does, however, set a “dominant discourse,” which is featured more prominently and frequently than alternative perspectives.

“The newsroom is a very complex place, with a number of editors, writers and other decision makers in terms of what gets into the newspaper,” said Karim. “You will see, obviously, different sources being used, but there’ll be pressure from above.”

“There will be certain dynamics, which will favour the use of JNS stories. It won’t be black and white.”

A good editor will “present a diversity of voices to their readership … which presents material from different perspectives,” he added.

“But if an editor sees that a source consistently marginalizes, or completely leaves out certain kinds of sources, then that’s a problem. Any journalist worth their salt would basically not run material from sources like that to ensure that their readership are getting good material.”

16

In ‘Covert Op,’ Israeli Consulate Backed Poll Inflating Support for Gaza War

By Emma Paling and Martin Lukacs, *The Breach*

December 8, 2023

The Israeli consulate in Toronto was secretly behind an opinion poll that experts say manipulated Canadian public opinion about Israel’s war on Gaza, an investigation by The Breach reveals.

A group of Liberal party insiders, part of a WhatsApp chat called “Lib Friends of Israel,” then discussed sending the poll to top officials within the prime minister’s office before its public release to “inform their thinking,” according to messages seen by The Breach.

The poll was conducted in late October by Aurora Strategies Global, which is headed by Liberal strategist Marcel Wieder, who *The Globe and Mail* once labelled a “dirty-tricks man” for his use of manipulative tactics.[1]

His firm did not disclose that the poll was done on behalf of the Israeli consulate in its news release or the poll’s full text, a move that flies in the face of conventions set out by the Canadian Research Insights Council, which the major polling agencies in the country follow.[2]

Consulates are arms of foreign states that are smaller diplomatic missions than embassies, usually located in a major city other than the capital.

The poll used “completely and totally loaded questions,” an accredited pollster who reviewed the poll said. The pollster asked not to be identified

to avoid recrimination between polling agencies.

The poll posed misleading statements as facts, offered inappropriate comparisons for respondents to agree with, and inaccurately told those polled that “pro-Hamas protests” were sweeping the country.

This line of questioning resulted in 60 per cent of Canadians agreeing “that Israel should invade Gaza and remove the Hamas leadership,” and 57 per cent expressing “concern” about protests.

“The sponsor should have been disclosed and the Israeli consulate should not be seen influencing public opinion, with a poll that wasn’t balanced and provided one-sided information,” said the pollster.

“I don’t know if it’s illegal but it’s not a good look.”

Despite a publicity push, the poll was only picked up for coverage by the conservative website Western Standard and three local Alberta newspapers.

The Israeli consulate shared an infographic of the poll’s findings on Instagram without disclosing that it was done on its behalf.[3]

Meanwhile, the media widely reported polls conducted around the same time by Angus Reid and Mainstreet Research that found that a large majority of Canadians support a ceasefire to the two-month bombing campaign.[4]

It’s a sign that the Israeli government’s public relations efforts have faltered in the face of credible accusations of war crimes in Gaza, which United Nations experts have described as a “genocide in the making.”[5]

The Canadian government, following the United States, has refused to call for a ceasefire to the war, which has so far killed more than 17,000 Palestinians and destroyed or damaged 45 per cent of housing units after Hamas attacks killed more than 1,100 Israelis.

Deborah Cowen, a professor of geography and planning at the University of Toronto, a member of the Jewish Faculty Network, and a former fellow of the Trudeau Foundation called the poll “outrageous.”

“The Israeli state is essentially engaging in covert operations to craft what was meant to pass as ‘Canadian public opinion,’ in an attempt to manufacture support for their indefensible attacks on civilian life in Gaza.”

‘Lib Friends of Israel’ strategized to influence PMO with poll

In early November, Aurora Strategy Global’s president Wieder shared the unreleased poll results to the “Lib Friends of Israel” WhatsApp chat, messages seen by The Breach show, telling them: “This was done on behalf of the Israeli Consulate in Toronto.”

The group has about 50 members, according to someone in the chat whom The Breach agreed not to identify so that they could share details about private conversations. The members include Liberal government staffers, lobbyists, political advisors, and former Liberal candidates.

Jack Siegel, a veteran Liberal insider who has served in multiple senior roles with the federal party, replied to Wieder suggesting the poll be shared with the prime minister’s office (PMO).[6]

“Is there anyway that the poll could be leaked to the [PMO] in advance of the public announcement, strictly on a heads up basis, so that they might be in a better position both to have it start informing their thinking immediately, and let them be ready for a potential response once it is made public?” he asked.

Wieder replied immediately that he would “check with the Consulate.”

Three hours later, Wieder wrote: “I have permission to release the findings to PMO under embargo.”

The Israeli consulate did not reply to a request for comment from The Breach by publication time.

The “Lib Friends of Israel” group then strategized about which officials Wieder should send the poll to.

Mark Resnick, a former senior advisor to prime minister Paul Martin, suggested sending it to “Harry,” in an apparent reference to Harry Orbach Miller, a policy advisor in the PMO who oversees the Israel and Palestine file.[7]

Jonathan Kales, a former advisor on Quebec to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, suggested he could send it to Trudeau’s chief of staff Katie Telford, “if there’s a thought that it would be helpful.”[8]

The messages, which were viewed and verified by The Breach, did not indicate whether Wieder sent the poll and what the reception was from the prime minister's office.

Spokespeople for the prime minister did not respond to a request for comment by publication time.

Wieder, Siegel, Resnick and Kales did not respond to requests for comment by publication time.

The WhatsApp chat appears to represent a harder-line faction within the Liberal party's network who are aggressively backing Israel's actions in Gaza.

Almost two dozen MPs, representing another faction within the party, wrote a letter to Trudeau in late October asking for him to advocate for a ceasefire.[9]

On Tuesday, Liberal MP Salma Zahid wrote a letter for the second time to Trudeau repeating the call.

"There is no longer any safe place for the innocent civilians of Gaza," Zahid wrote.[10] "Told to move to the South of Gaza, the fighting is now as intense in the South, and they have now been told to evacuate the South as well…Where are the innocent civilians to go? Nowhere is safe."

Israeli consulate's PR 'disturbing but not surprising'

The poll is a window into the Israeli government's public relations (PR) efforts.

The country has long engaged in PR or propaganda campaigns abroad—known in Hebrew as Hasbara—that are well-known for their organizational strength.[11]

Under Benjamin Netanyahu's previous coalition government, campaigning abroad was carried out clandestinely by a Strategic Affairs Ministry.[12] According to Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, the ministry saw "themselves as the heads of a public affairs commando unit."

In 2017, its director-general Sima Vaknin-Gil said its goal was to undermine the narrative “that Israel equals apartheid.”

In an interview with Israeli media outlet Y Net News, she was frank: “In order to win, however, we must use tricks and craftiness.”[13]

Involved in that broader effort was Psy-Group, an Israeli psychological warfare firm with close ties to Mossad that specializes in covert operations.[14]

Their tactics, as reported in *The Nation* and *The New Yorker*, included cancellation of events, damage to the reputations of students, lawsuits, the creation of fake news outlets, phony Facebook personas and posts, and “masked PR” that is “not attributable to us.”[15]

In recent years, however, the Israeli government’s public relations have been weakened, undermined by Netayahu’s corruption, government underfunding, and jockeying between different ministries and partners in his far-right governing coalition.

At the beginning of 2023, the Netanyahu government re-established a Hasbara Ministry, appointing far-right politician Galit Distel Atbaryan as its minister.

But this fall, the Hasbara Ministry was closed after Distel Atbaryan resigned, citing a lack of resources and authority.[16] In November, she posted on X, formerly Twitter, that “Gaza should be erased…and let them die badly.”[17]

Deborah Cowen said it was “deeply disturbing but not surprising” to see the Israeli consulate engaging in such tactics in Canada.

“Producing this kind of slanted research—essentially ‘fake public opinion’—is a way of suppressing meaningful debate about Israeli policy, which has been a cornerstone of Israeli public relations abroad for decades,” she said. “Anyone who believes in the most basic principles of democracy and the integrity of public opinion reporting should be incensed.”

Consular controversies have erupted before during Netanyahu’s coalition government. In spring 2023, Netanyahu appointed to the New

York consulate far-right Israeli politician May Golan, who once said she was “proud to be a racist.”[18]

‘A communications program designed to change your mind’

The accredited pollster who reviewed Aurora Strategies Global’s poll for The Breach said it “reads more like a communications program designed to change your mind.”

“There is a structure and method for polling so you’re getting results that have integrity,” the pollster said. “When you’re conducting polls that are one-sided, you can’t say that that’s fair.”

Those polled were asked if they were concerned by the “recent pro-Hamas protests and demonstrations across multiple cities in Canada.”

No such pro-Hamas protests have been formally organized by any civil society organizations in Canada. But 286,000 Canadians have signed a petition urging Prime Minister Trudeau to call for a ceasefire, a record high since parliamentary e-petitions began in 2015.[19]

The poll also asked people to “evaluate Hamas in comparison to these other terrorist organizations,” naming ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the Taliban.

While Hamas has engaged in attacks against Israeli civilians, including the killing of 851 civilians and 368 IDF soldiers on Oct. 7, it is also a political organization that—unlike the other groups named—has run in democratic, national elections and won office in 2006.[20]

Before soliciting opinions about Hamas, the polling firm asked those polled “to what extent are you aware of the various facts.”

The “facts” they cited include that “Israel voluntarily withdrew in 2005 and forcibly removed any Israeli settlers who lived in the Gaza Strip, turning the area over to Palestinian control.”

In fact, according to the United Nations, Israel remains an occupying force because it continues to control Gaza’s air, sea, and borders. The removal of settlers in 2005 was, according to the chief advisor to then-

Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, a tactic of "freezing the peace process."[21]

Another "fact" says that "Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007 following fighting with Fatah, the Palestinian organization that currently controls the West Bank."

In fact, after Hamas won elections in 2006, the U.S., Israel, and Fatah plotted to violently overthrow them to undo the democratic result, which led Hamas to pre-empt the coup and take office in Gaza.[22]

'Marcel the Weasel'

Wieder, president of Aurora Strategies, is no stranger to controversy.

In the late 1990s, he admitted to making up a fake citizens' group and fake polling firm which both spread untrue allegations that a Toronto election candidate had received illegal donations, *The Globe and Mail* reported.[23]

According to the newspaper, the "dirty-tricks man" hired a company in Alabama to conduct a phone campaign using the name "Argus Read," which sounds like well-known Canadian polling firm Angus Reid. Later, he was sued and settled out of court with both Angus Reid and the candidate.

The Globe and Mail nicknamed him "Marcel the Weasel," but within a few years Wieder was serving as one of Ontario Liberal premier Dalton McGuinty's leading communications "gurus."[24]

He has been a regular Liberal commentator in the media and in 2011 founded Aurora Strategy Global, which offers clients public relations and lobbying services in Canada, the U.S., and Israel.

"The time has come to understand that this is a fight between good and evil, right and wrong," Wieder wrote about the current Israeli war on Gaza on LinkedIn a month ago.[25]

"There can be no spectators on the sideline. It is time to choose sides. If you value freedom, decency, and democracy then you only have one choice.

If not, then you have thrown your lot in with the evil that will destroy all what [sic] you cherish.”

In September, Wieder also gave an interview to a Portuguese-Canadian newspaper.[26]

“Lying is never a good strategy in politics,” he said. “Eventually the truth comes out and you’re caught.”

Voices from Palestine

17

Report from the Frontline of Israel's War of Annihilation

Hossam Shabat, *Drop Site News*

March 24, 2025

Israel has barred foreign journalists from reporting in Gaza. In their absence, Palestinian reporters should have been elevated by Western media. Instead, they have been systematically targeted and killed by Israel—while Canada's press and media institutions remained largely silent.

We chose to conclude this book with the voice of Hossam Shabat, a Palestinian journalist and correspondent for Al Jazeera who was assassinated by an Israeli drone in northern Gaza in March 2025.[1] *His final piece was published by Drop Site News, accompanied by a powerful introduction by Sharif Abdel Kouddous.*

***

Hossam Shabat is dead. I am beyond rage and despair as I write these words. The Israeli military bombed his car this morning as he was traveling in Beit Lahia. Videos fill my screen of his body lying on the street, carried to the hospital, grieved by his colleagues and loved ones. These are the kinds of tragic scenes Hossam himself would so often document for the world. He was an exemplary journalist: brave, tireless, and dedicated to telling the story of Palestinians in Gaza.

Hossam was one of a handful of reporters who remained in northern Gaza through Israel's genocidal war. His ability to cover one of the most brutal military campaigns in recent history was almost beyond comprehension. He bore witness to untold death and suffering on an almost daily basis for 17 months. He was displaced over 20 times. He was often hungry. He buried many of his journalist colleagues. In November, he was wounded in an Israeli airstrike. I still can't believe I am referring to him in the past tense. Israel obliterates the present.

When I contacted Hossam in November to ask him to write for Drop Site News, he was enthusiastic. "Greetings habibi. May God keep you. I am very happy to have this opportunity," he wrote. "There are so many ideas, scenes, stories."

His first dispatch for Drop Site[2] was a searing account of a vicious mass expulsion campaign by the Israeli military in Beit Lahia that forced thousands of Palestinian families to flee one of the last remaining shelters in the besieged town:

Some of the wounded fell on the road with no hope of getting treatment. "I was walking with my sister in the street," said Rahaf, 16. She and her sister were the sole survivors in their family of an earlier airstrike that killed 70 people. "Suddenly my sister fell due to the bombing. I saw blood pouring from her, but I couldn't do anything. I left her in the street, and no one pulled her out. I was screaming, but no one heard me."

His writing was lyrical and arresting. I struggled to translate and edit his pieces—to do them justice, to convey his emotive use of Arabic into something relatable in English. In the typical editorial see-saw back and forth of finalizing a piece, I would often return to him with clarifications and questions, asking him for additional details and direct quotes. He was always quick to respond despite his extraordinary circumstances.

In January, Hossam filed a piece about the three days between when the "ceasefire" deal was announced and when it was scheduled to be implemented[3], a period when Israel escalated its bombing campaign across Gaza:

They targeted the al-Falah school; they bombed an entire residential block in Jabaliya; they killed families, like the Alloush family, whose bodies have not yet been recovered and still lie under and over the rubble. The children I saw that night appeared happy but they were no longer living, their faces frozen in a mix of smiles and blood.

In early December, 2024, when writing a preamble to one of his articles, I asked him to confirm his age. “Hahaha. I’m young. 24,” he wrote. Then moments later he clarified: “Actually, I haven’t turned 24 yet. I’m 23.” I told him he was young in age only, but in experience he was old (it sounds better in Arabic). “I'm really tired,” he responded. “I swear I have no strength left. I can't find a place to sleep. I've been displaced 20 times.” He continued: “Did you know that I am the only one in my family who lives alone in the north?” Last month, during the “ceasefire,” he was reunited with his mother for the first time in 492 days.[4]

In October, the Israeli military placed Hossam and five other Palestinian journalists on a hit list. At the time, he said it felt like he was “hunted.” He called on people to speak out using the hashtag #ProtectTheJournalists: “I plead everyone to share the reality about Journalists in order to spread awareness about the real plans of the Israeli occupation to target journalists in order to impose a media blackout. Spread the hashtag and talk about us!”[5]

In December, after the Israeli military killed five journalists in an airstrike on their vehicle, I messaged to check in on him.

“Our job is only to die,” he responded. “I hate the whole world. No one is doing anything. I swear I've come to hate this job.” About his surviving colleagues he wrote, “We've started saying to each other: “Ok, whose turn is it?…Our families consider us already martyred.”

When Israel resumed its scorched earth bombing last week, I messaged again to check in on him. He responded with one word: “Death.”

Throughout it all, Hossam would message with ideas for stories, or just to relay what was happening in the north. In his messages and voice notes, he often somehow still managed to be warm and funny—a kind of rebellion against the death all around him.

After the “ceasefire” went into effect, he returned to his hometown of Beit Hanoun on the northeastern edge of Gaza. Hardly a structure was left standing, but he was determined to stay and document the destruction.

He messaged me late Sunday night, just hours before he was killed. He had been forced to leave his hometown of Beit Hanoun on the day of Israel’s renewed assault last week and was forcibly displaced yet again—this time to Jabaliya. We had agreed on him writing a piece about the attack last week and what he had witnessed.

“Habibi,” he wrote. “I miss you.” I asked him what the situation was like in Jabaliya. “Difficult,” he said.

He sent his piece, and I read through it, sent my follow-up questions. He only answered one before going offline. I messaged him again as soon as I woke up this morning. I didn’t yet know that he had been killed.

What you are about to read is Hossam’s last article. I translated it through tears.

—Sharif Abdel Kouddous

***

BEIT HANOUN, GAZA—The night was dark and cautiously quiet. Everyone fell into an anxious sleep. But the tranquility was quickly shattered by deafening screams. As the bombs rained down, the wails of neighbors announced the first moments of the resumption of Israel’s military campaign. Beit Hanoun was plunged into panic and terror. Cries of distress rose amid the screech of the shells in a scene that reflected the magnitude of the disaster engulfing the city. This was only the beginning. The massacre of entire families quickly followed. Columns of smoke rose everywhere. The bombing did not cease for a moment, drowning everything in a relentless hail of fire and suffering.

The Israeli attack is continuing. The occupation is practicing its brutality with unprecedented bombardment leaving behind horrific scenes

of destruction and bloodshed. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the number of martyrs over the past six days has topped 700, reflecting the degree of such immense human suffering. OCHA also reports how Gaza is suffering from a severe shortage of medicines and medical aid, exacerbating an already dire situation.

In the first six days of this renewed military operation, northern Gaza witnessed four bloody massacres. The most notable was the Mubarak family massacre, which took place as the family was gathering in mourning to offer their condolences to Dr. Salim Mubarak. In an instant, their collective grieving was turned into a sea of blood and body parts. The entire family was killed: Dr. Salim, his wife, his children, his parents. No one survived. One eyewitness summed it up plainly: “They were all killed.” The victims were not on a battlefield but in a house of mourning. It was a crime in every sense of the word.

This massacre was not the only one—it was followed by successive attacks on other families, including the Abu Nasr family, then the Abu Halim family—bringing to mind the vicious bombardment in the very beginning of the war after October 7. The aggression is ongoing, relentless, targeting innocent civilians indiscriminately, leaving behind only destruction and death.

When I arrived on the scene, I wasn’t ready for the horror before my eyes. The streets were filled with the dead. Under every stone lay a martyr. Dozens were crying for help from underneath the rubble of their homes but there was no one to respond. Screams filled the air while everyone stood helpless. My tears didn’t stop. The scenes were more than any human being could bear. The ambulances were filled with corpses, their bodies and limbs piled on top and intertwined with one another. We could no longer distinguish between children and men, between the injured and the dead.

At Al-Andalus hospital the scene was even more painful. The hospital was filled with martyrs. Mothers bid silent farewells to their children. Medical staff worked in horrific conditions, trying to treat the injured with only the most basic means available. It was an impossible situation with massive numbers of dead and wounded being brought in at a terrifying rate.

Israel’s aggression continues. Massacre after massacre, leaving only the screams of mothers in its wake and the dreams of children that have turned to ash. There is no justification for this. Everything is being crushed: the lives of innocent people, their dignity, and their hopes for a better future.

Advocating for Change

18

Palestine Media Advocacy Toolkit

By Jason Toney and Anthony Issa, CJPME

I. Media advocacy in the age of genocide

The Media Accountability Project (MAP), an initiative led by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), created this toolkit to challenge bias and disinformation in Canadian media coverage of Palestine. We offer it not as a definitive guide, but as a living document rooted in struggle and victories.

MAP draws inspiration from the now-defunct U.S.-based Palestine Media Watch (PMW)—not to be confused with the Israeli organisation of the same name. PMW's advisory board included Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman, Hanan Ashrawi, Norman Finkelstein, Tanya Reinhart, and Mustapha Bargouti. Day-to-day operations were led by Ahmed Bouzid, author of The Media Playbook, a dated but still useful resource for Palestine media advocacy.[1]

The tactics outlined here yield results. They aim to prefigure a media landscape that treats Palestine, Palestinians, and their advocates with fairness and integrity. Journalists are expected to meet professional standards set by industry organizations and the outlets where they work. This toolkit shows how to hold them to those standards.

We conceive this toolkit during Israel's genocide in Gaza. Canadian media institutions are struggling to contain the fallout from their complicity—externally and within their own ranks. As a growing movement for

Palestine solidarity has emerged, thousands are expressing their discontent to media institutions. The cracks caused by widespread bias are opening up space for change. Israel's long-held narrative dominance is no longer absolute. Social media has peeled back the curtain on war crimes that legacy media have often ignored or downplayed. Amnesty International has called it a "live-streamed genocide."[2] Our work is to widen these cracks and push for accountability.

The failures of Canadian media did not begin on October 7, 2023, but the atrocities in Gaza since that date have made them undeniable. Despite the genocide, we've seen consistent anti-Palestinian patterns: the routine exclusion of Palestinian voices, passive descriptions of Israeli violence, uncritical repetition of Israeli military claims, failure to correct misinformation, and erasure of context.

When Palestinians are included, their voices are frequently offset by Israeli officials, as though both views are equally credible. When Israeli violence is described using active language, officials are given ample space to respond; Palestinians are rarely afforded the same. Skepticism of Israeli claims often comes too late, as in the case of Israel's March 2025 killing of 15 Palestinian Red Crescent workers.[3] Corrections, when made, are usually buried. Key context is often absent from headlines and ledes.

News wires such as the Associated Press and Reuters dominate Canadian coverage of Palestine. Their exclusions—especially failing to contextualize or disaggregate death tolls—are replicated by Canadian outlets. Postmedia's use of the Jewish News Syndicate (JNS), an openly pro-Israel wire service, has further entrenched anti-Palestinian bias. Its one-sided articles masquerade as journalism while often reading like opinion at best and propaganda at worst.

Groups like HonestReporting Canada (HRC) mobilize mass harassment campaigns targeting journalists and editors with baseless accusations of antisemitism rather than journalistic standards, cultivating a chilling effect when it comes to the Palestine beat. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has an army of lobbyists and PR professionals working to influence narratives.

Accountability in Canadian media is a fleeting notion. There's more to say about its limits than its promise. However, there are still tools we can use to pressure institutions, platform Palestinian voices, and fight for accuracy. MAP and its grassroots network of allies have recorded hundreds of tangible impacts in the past year, which includes corrections, apologies, context added to stories, headline changes, improved future coverage, and ethics council victories. Thousands of letters have been sent to newsrooms and we've built relationships with sympathetic journalists working to change things from within. This work scales in impact with each new voice expressing their informed discontent.

II. Anti-Palestinian racism runs rampant

Anti-Palestinian Racism (APR) arises in both blatant and insidious forms in the media. The opinion sections of newspapers in particular are filled with APR, especially those owned by Postmedia, which maintains a hardline pro-Israel editorial bias.

However, media that shy away from such obvious bias still allow APR to seep into their coverage of Palestine. Raising good-faith concerns about APR to journalists and editors can be an effective way of changing long-term trends in coverage. Much of Canadian media voluntarily agrees to abide by various anti-racist principles—although interpretations of racism tend to be narrow and enforcement of these principles is almost non-existent in the context of Palestinians. Still, journalists are often receptive to critiques that cite existing professional ethics and organisations.

The definition of APR created by the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) is an invaluable resource for challenging newsrooms. In the ACLA definition, APR is:

> a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms including: denying the

> Nakba and justifying violence against Palestinians; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging and rights in relation to occupied and historic Palestine; erasing the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies; defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander such as being inherently antisemitic, a terrorist threat/sympathizer or opposed to democratic values.[4]

The mainstreaming of APR has been part of a deliberate effort to defame Palestinians and insulate Israel against criticisms of its occupation and apartheid policies. APR is a tool that furthers the interests of the perpetual war economy. It gives cover to and justification for the continued oppression of Palestinian people. By challenging APR in the media, we are working toward dismantling a narrative weapon that maintains occupation and apartheid.

When raising concerns about anti-Palestinian racism, keep these things in mind:

- Many journalists are unfamiliar with the term. Educate them. The ACLA definition is a powerful tool.
- Be specific. Describe how the article perpetuates APR.
- Focus on actions, not intentions. Generally, it is best to avoid calling a journalist racist; explain how the work fails ethically.
- Cite media standards. Most outlets claim to oppose racism. Link coverage issues to APR to increase pressure on editors.

III. Common patterns of bias in Canadian coverage

The following patterns are based on reports by the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy (PIPD),[5] the Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU),[6] the International Press Institute,[7] and the Arab and Middle East

Journalists Association (AMEJA).[8] Bias appears across media types—print, broadcast, online—as well as in all facets of coverage, including headlines, images, scripts, and soundbites. All are subject to scrutiny.[9]

False balance and both sides framing

These related tactics distort coverage by presenting unequal claims as equally valid. False balance occurs when opposing views are portrayed as equally evidence-based even though one lacks credible support (e.g., framing a confirmed famine in Gaza as "disputed" by including unverified Israeli denials). Both-sides framing extends this by implying moral equivalence between an occupier and occupied people, obscuring power asymmetries. In Palestine coverage, this often means equating Palestinian resistance with Israeli state violence or burying Palestinian perspectives beneath dominant Israeli narratives. Both tactics feign neutrality while privileging Israel's standpoint.

Erasure of Palestinian voices

Palestinians are often excluded or relegated to the background. Israeli officials dominate headlines, while Palestinian civilians, experts, and rights groups are marginalized.

This leaves Canadian audiences with a distorted understanding of occupation, violence and apartheid.

Misleading language and framing

Palestinians are described passively ("died in clashes"), while Israeli deaths are presented with clear perpetrators. Resistance is labeled "terrorism," while Israeli actions are sanitized as "responses."

Decontextualization or censorship by omission

Palestinian history and context are often erased. Canadian media frequently omit the fact that Gaza is under a longstanding blockade, that Israeli settlements violate international law, or that major human rights organisations describe Israel as an apartheid regime.[10] Even when covering on-the-ground events, stories rarely reference occupation, blockades, or legal findings that contextualize violence.

Prejudicial placement of viewpoints and single viewpoint reporting

Article headlines that include a claim followed by "Israel says" are commonplace in Canadian media, far more so than those that cite a Palestinian source. Uncritically repeating government officials and adding "Israel says" is not journalism. Israeli perspectives appear early and prominently; Palestinian ones, if included, are buried. Some articles omit Palestinian views entirely. Often, broadcast media will air a short segment on an issue in Palestine and then include a soundbite from an Israeli official that contradicts the very report that was just given—and nothing from a Palestinian source.

Factual errors

Journalistic ethics demand accuracy. Misstatements, particularly about Palestine, are common and often go uncorrected.

Lack of verification

Unverified Israeli claims are published without skepticism. Assertions are accepted as fact when they serve dominant narratives.

Exaggeration

Media ran with sensationalized stories for weeks and months following October 7. These exaggerated versions of particular events drove

engagement, but failed the public. Myths like beheaded babies, inflated death tolls, or mass rape were reported as fact without evidence. Many of the unproven claims were never corrected.

Self-censorship

Despite mounting evidence—including statements by UN experts—most Canadian outlets have avoided using the term “genocide” to describe Israeli attacks in Gaza. A notable case involved a CBC anchor who interrupted a grieving Palestinian guest to say the word “genocide” could not be used by CBC.[11] Following public backlash, CBC issued a clarification stating the term is not banned, but requires attribution.

This editorial fear, especially in public broadcasting, reinforces a chilling pattern: Palestinian grief and vocabulary are policed, while Israeli narratives are amplified without equivalent scrutiny.

IV. How to critique the media

Choose a specific angle

When writing to a newsroom, it is important to establish your main angle and the section above provides a good starting point when drafting an outline.

While choosing a specific angle for critique is important, it’s equally important to anticipate how editors and producers may respond to your scrutiny. Often, they will defend their outlet’s coverage as fair or balanced overall. Anticipating this response can make your critique stronger. Frame your argument in terms of patterns, context, or cumulative effects, all the while pushing for the change of the specific mistake you are concerned about.

Leverage standards and ethics

MAP staff and many dissidents before us have found that complaints carry more weight when tied to established journalism standards. Most major outlets in Canada either publish their own ethical guidelines or refer to widely accepted ones.

If a newsroom has its own code (CBC, *The Globe and Mail*, Global News, etc.), reference that directly. Otherwise, use national standards like the Canadian Association of Journalists' (CAJ) "Ethics Guidelines"[12] for print and online media, and the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CBSC) "Code of Ethics"[13] for broadcasters.

The CAJ's ethics emphasize accuracy, fairness, independence, transparency, diversity, and accountability. The CAJ website also includes issue-specific discussion papers.[14]

The CBSC promotes a similar set of values, but also highlights the importance of respecting human rights, inclusion, and avoiding harmful stereotypes.

Familiarizing yourself with these principles can make a difference in the perceived credibility of your concerns.

Send a letter

Once you have a clear critique and the relevant ethical standard, write your letter. Include precise and relevant details such as the article name, journalist name, outlet, a link if it was online, and date and time. Leaving these details out can cause overworked editors or producers to ignore you.

Look for a standards editor, news director, or ombudsman to address directly. Avoid general contact forms if you can. If you can find one contact for a media outlet, you can try to guess the email address of other staff by following the naming convention that organisation uses (e.g. firstname.lastname@cbc.ca).

If you get a response, consider requesting a meeting. Some editors will meet with individuals or community groups. Bring an ally or expert if

you're unsure about the conversation.

Alternatively, if you think an article is concerning but there isn't a clear violation of standards, consider a letter to the editor. This can be an effective way of expressing dissent when a correction or clarification isn't possible and still puts pressure on the outlet. Most outlets post submission instructions online.

Not all letters need to be complaints. When a journalist gets it right, thank them. They often face attacks for fair reporting on Palestine. A letter of support—especially one copied to their boss—can go a long way.

V. Escalating to a Formal Complaint

If your concerns are ignored or dismissed, formal complaints can be filed through regulatory or oversight bodies. These organisations don't guarantee justice, but they create records and add pressure.

National NewsMedia Council

For written media in print or online, check if the newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council (NNC). The National NewsMedia Council (NNC) is a voluntary, self-regulatory ethics body for print and online media in Canada.[15] It plays a dual role of promoting ethical journalism practices within Canada's news industry and adjudicating complaints submitted by readers against media outlets for breaches of journalistic standards.

The NNC does not have its own set of ethics or standards. Instead, it relies on existing industry guidelines, such as those set by the Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ).

If the complaint falls under the NNC mandate, the Council attempts to mediate between the paper and the complainant. If the dispute is not resolved, the NNC issues a formal ruling, which may include

recommendations for corrective action. All NNC decisions are public and can be used as precedents when making future complaints.

Information about how to file a complaint is available on the NNC website. Filing a complaint is a short process.

Canadian Broadcasting Standards Council

The Canadian Broadcasting Standards Council is a national, voluntary self-regulatory organization created by Canada's private broadcasters. Virtually every established broadcaster in Canada is a member. On the off chance an outlet is not a member, you can contact the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). The CBSC is responsible for adjudicating complaints from viewers and listeners about biased, misleading, or unethical content in radio and television broadcasts.

The complaints process for the CBSC is similar to the NNC, but is specific to broadcasters. The details on how to file are on the CBSC website.

Quebec Press Council

Quebec has its own independent press oversight body, the Quebec Press Council (QPC). The QPC handles complaints related to journalistic ethics violations in any news that appears in Quebec.[16] QPC publishes decisions about outlets whether they are members or not.

The QPC operates based on the principles outlined in its Guide to Journalistic Ethics,[17] which is similar to the CAJ's ethics.

The article and complaint can be in French or English. Complaint process details are on the QPC website.

CBC Ombudsman and other media standards

Some outlets use an in-house set of standards.

CBC's "Journalistic Standards and Practices" is a guide used by all CBC outlets.[18] The principles encompass all CBC content, including third-party content.

CBC principles are effectively enforced by the Ombudsman, who decides if a violation has occurred and what action CBC must take to resolve it. Any formal complaints you hope to have reviewed by the Ombudsman require including them as a primary recipient (ombud@cbc.ca) on your initial letter of complaint. All of the Ombudsman's reviews are public.

Global News, CTV, and CityNews have their own internal codes that can be raised in your initial letter, but these broadcasters are ultimately subject to the rulings of the CBSC.

The Globe and Mail has its own editorial code and a standards editor, but is also a member of the NNC.[19] A complaint can start with the standards editor, but be escalated to the NNC.

VI. Grassroots response

Beyond writing directly to a newsroom or filing a formal complaint, there are other ways we can meaningfully impact the media.

Social media

Posting about biased coverage online helps educate others and apply pressure. It helps to include links, context, and steps for action. Tag outlets and editors to ensure visibility. This tactic has worked repeatedly for MAP.

Engage your network

Share problematic articles with solidarity groups or organisations like CJPME. If you're part of such a group, consider forming a media monitoring team. If your group is misrepresented in the media, that direct experience is powerful evidence.

Become a MAP responder

Sign up as a MAP responder (cjpmemap.ca). Each week, we send out action alerts about particularly egregious or positive media examples, with suggested talking points and contact details. This collective action produces results and is a quick and easy way to get involved.

VII. Conclusion: Persistence matters

Canada's establishment media is far from fulfilling its own standards when it comes to Palestine. One of the most important things you can do to challenge this pervasive bias is to support independent media outlets, like the publisher of this book or the outlets that many of the journalists in this anthology work for.

Media change is slow. Sometimes it's invisible. Sometimes it's a buried correction or quiet rewording. Sometimes, it's a letter that gets no reply, but has an impact on the thinking of a journalist or editor.

Every intervention adds to a growing record of resistance. It shifts the tone, holds power to account, and encourages others to speak out.

This work is frustrating—but necessary. It's how we fight for the truth and amplify the voices the media would rather erase.

Contributors

Zahraa Al-Akhrass is a Palestinian-Canadian journalist and content creator with experience in the newsrooms of Al-Jazeera Media Network and Global News. She was dismissed from her job as a video journalist at Global for her social media posts in support of Palestine in October 2023. She has since been working as a freelancer.

Jeremy Appel is an independent Edmonton-based journalist and author of the book, *Kenneyism: Jason Kenney's Pursuit of Power* (Dundurn Press, 2024). He writes The Orchard newsletter on Substack.

Muhannad Ayyash is a Professor of Sociology at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, and a policy analyst at Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network. He is the author of *Lordship and Liberation in Palestine-Israel* (Columbia University Press, 2025) and *A Hermeneutics of Violence* (University of Toronto Press, 2019). His academic writings focus on political violence, Zionism and colonial modernity, settler colonial sovereignty, anti-Palestinian racism, and Palestinian decolonial movements. He has also published dozens of commentary pieces in Al Jazeera, The Baffler, Middle East Eye, The Breach, Al-Shabaka, and Mondoweiss, among other outlets.

Loubna Chlaikhy is a Franco-Moroccan journalist based in Canada focusing on human rights, migration, social justice, and disinformation. Through her reporting and investigations, she seeks to challenge dominant narratives and amplify marginalized voices. Her work has been published in national and regional media outlets in France and Canada.

Ben Cuthbert holds a PhD in Computational Neuroscience, and currently works as a freelance data analyst and machine learning consultant. He is passionate about open science, government transparency, and deflating AI hype.

Sonya Fatah is an associate professor at the School of Journalism at Toronto Metropolitan University, where she teaches media criticism, live journalism, and international journalism. She is the co-lead of the Canada Press Freedom Project, which documents incidents of press freedom violations in Canada and produces qualitative reports, tools, and guides on issues that impact media workers' capacity to do their job. She has previously covered India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan for publications in the U.S. and Canada, including *Global Post, The Globe and Mail*, and *Toronto Star*.

David Gray-Donald is the publisher and editorial director of *The Grind*, a free print publication in Toronto. He has been a journalist for more than a decade and is the co-author

of the book *The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-called Canada* (Between the Lines, 2023).

Anthony Issa is a media analyst with Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME). With prior experience as an advocacy journalist at The Link newspaper, Anthony works to expose anti-Palestinian racism in the media as well as highlight grassroots Palestine solidarity activism around Canada through his reporting, research, and social media advocacy.

Iman Kassam is a broadcast journalist with more than 14 years of experience in radio, television, podcasting, and digital storytelling. A first-generation, queer, non-binary, Muslim, South Asian Canadian, Iman brings a rich, intersectional lens to their work. Alongside journalism, they've been a musician and community organizer, using sound and storytelling to amplify underrepresented voices. Today, they teach journalism at Seneca Polytechnic and conduct research at Royal Roads University.

Shenaz Kermalli is a freelance journalist as well as a journalism instructor at Toronto Metropolitan University and the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies. A former producer with BBC News, CBC, and Al Jazeera English, her writing has appeared in *The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star*, and *The Guardian*, among others.

Katia Lo Innes is a writer and journalist. She is the associate producer at The Breach.

Martin Lukacs is an award-winning journalist and author. He's the managing editor of The Breach, which was named Canada's best small-sized media outlet in 2024 by the Digital Publishing Awards. He is also the author of the books *The Poilievre Project: A Radical Blueprint for Corporate Rule* (Breach Books, 2025) and *The Trudeau Formula: Seduction and Betrayal in an Age of Discontent* (Black Rose Books, 2019). Lukacs was previously an environmental writer for The Guardian, and he has written for *The New York Review of Books, Toronto Star, The Walrus*, and other Canadian publications.

Dania Majid is the co-founder and president of the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association and the lead author of its 2022 report "Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations." She is the co-founder and organizer of Vote Palestine, as well as co-founder and artistic director of the Toronto Palestine Film Festival. She also sits on the steering committee for the Hearing Palestine program at the University of Toronto. Dania is also a housing rights lawyer with a legal aid clinic in Ontario and serves on the steering committee of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Ontario Chapter.

Asmaa Malik is professor of journalism at Toronto Metropolitan University. Her research and writing focus on newsroom equity, representation, and the silencing of marginalized voices in North American media. She has held senior editorial roles at the *Toronto Star* and *Montreal Gazette* and her work has also appeared in *The Walrus* and *The Washington Post*. She was also a contributor to the anthology, *Subdivided: City-Building in an Age of Hyper-Diversity* (Coach House Books, 2016).

Pacinthe Mattar is an independent journalist, writer, and producer. Born in Egypt and raised between Canada, Saudi Arabia, and the U.A.E, she spent a decade at the CBC producing for national radio and television programmes. She received a National Magazine Award in 2021 for her feature essay "Objectivity Is A Privilege Afforded to White Journalists." She was the 2022 Martin Wise Goodman Nieman Fellow at Harvard University.

Emma Paling is a writer and journalist in Toronto. She previously worked as a senior editor at The Breach. Emma's award-winning journalism has been published widely by CBC News, HuffPost, and Vice.

Shree Paradkar is an award-winning journalist, public speaker, race and gender equity advocate, and journalism instructor. She is an investigative reporter at Toronto Star. Among other awards, she won the 2025 PEN Canada Ken Filkow prize for expanding free expression in Canada with her advocacy for young journalists of colour and for her writings on Palestinian rights.

Molly Schumann is a pseudonym for a former TV and radio producer who worked at CBC for five years.

Jason Toney is the director of media advocacy at Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), where he leads the Media Accountability Project, monitoring Canadian media coverage of Palestine. He has been active in Palestine solidarity for more than a decade. Jason previously worked in independent publishing with Black Rose Books and Daraja Press. He is the editor of *Take the City* (Black Rose Books, 2022) and has published essays on media, municipalism, Hannah Arendt, and Murray Bookchin.

Acknowledgements

This anthology was inspired by the movement for Palestinian liberation from occupation and apartheid—and we hope it serves as a tool to help it further grow. This collection affirms what many people have known in their bones, that Canada's establishment media is deeply anti-Palestinian.

We are grateful to contributors for their work, and for their permission to republish it. And we are grateful to the organizations that supported this project: The Breach, the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

Special thanks are due to the Breach Books coordinator Tayla Shair, who did crucial work on every aspect of The Breach's new publishing arm—including research, analysis, promotions, and sales. She kept us from getting lost in a maze of google documents, made sure we hit our deadlines, and offered political insights.

Donya Ziaee coordinated and helped with the final editorial and publication push. Tannara Yelland did down-to-thewire editing. Andira Hernandez-Ramdwar distilled many of this collection's most urgent stories into their striking and poignant cover design, and graphics that appear throughout the book. Amanda Siino kept a handle on the logistics and finances of a new but ambitious publishing project. Big thanks to other team members of The Breach for their help and support, including Katia Lo Innes, Dru Oja Jay, and Desmond Cole.

Martin thanks his partner Donya for all her support and love, as well as Jason and Dania for their work together, during which they always managed to share laughs and light-heartedness.

Dania thanks the many journalists she's met over the years who shared their struggles to address anti-Palestinian racism in the newsroom, Martin

and Jason for the invitation to be a part of this project, and her family for their endless support.

Jason thanks Lynn Naji, Michael Bueckert, and Anthony Issa, who were a constant sounding board and always enthusiastic supporters, as well as the team at The Breach and his co-editors. Shana Scurti took the lead for him at home when he worked the extra hours this book sometimes demanded.

We dedicate this book to the Palestinian journalists on the ground in Gaza, who have done fearless reporting while being targeted and killed by Israel.

Notes

Introduction

1 The exact death toll from October 7th remains uncertain. This book uses as its reference a May 2024 investigation by Agence France-Presse (AFP), which reported that 1,189 people were killed, including 810 civilians and 379 Israeli security personnel. This figure also includes Israeli civilians who were taken captive and later killed in Gaza. Some of the Israeli civilians who died on Oct 7 were killed by Israeli forces as a result of the Hannibal Directive—a military protocol that authorizes the use of force to prevent the capture of Israeli personnel, even at the risk of harming hostages. Israeli officials and media sources have confirmed the Directive was invoked on October 7 but its full impact remains unclear. A United Nations commission found that at least 14 Israeli civilians were killed by Israeli forces that day in incidents linked to the Directive. Agence France Press, "New Tally Puts Oct 7 Attack Death Toll In Israel At 1,189," *Barron's*, May 28, 2024, https://www.barrons.com/news/new-tally-puts-oct-7-attack-death-toll-in-israel-at-1-189-3e038de6;
Yaniv Kubovich, "IDF Ordered Hannibal Directive on October 7 to Prevent Hamas Taking Soldiers Captive," *Haaretz*, July 7, 2024, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-07-07/ty-article-magazine/.premium/idf-ordered-hannibal-directive-on-october-7-to-prevent-hamas-taking-soldiers-captive/00000190-89a2-d776-a3b1-fdbe45520000; Nicola Smith, "Israel killed own citizens on October 7 in 'Hannibal Directive', UN claims," *The Telegraph*, June 13, 2024, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/06/13/israel-killed-dozen-own-citizens-on-october-7-un-claims/

2 Avi Shlaim, *Genocide in Gaza: Israel's Long War on Palestine* (The Irish Page Press, 2025), https://irishpages.org/product/genocide-in-gaza/?v=5435c69ed3bc

3 Zeina Jamaluddine et al, "Traumatic injury mortality in the Gaza Strip from Oct 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024: a capture–recapture analysis," *The Lancet* 405, no. 10477 (January 2025): 469-477. 55,000 is widely considered a conservative estimate; this study estimates that the death toll is about 40 per cent higher.

4 Emma Graham-Harrison, "A visual guide to the destruction of Gaza," The Guardian, January 18, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/18/a-visual-guide-to-the-destruction-of-gaza; The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is the leading United Nations, "Gaza: UN expert condemns 'unrelenting war' on health system amid airstrikes on hospitals and health workers," press release, December 7, 2023,

https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/12/gaza-un-expert-condemns-unrelenting-war-health-system-amid-airstrikes

5 “225 journalists killed, dozens of media outlets destroyed by Israeli forces, says PJS,” *Wafa Palestinian News & Info Agency*, June 5, 2025, https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/158109#:~:text=The%20syndicate%20reported%20that%20a,was%20martyred%20in%20February%202024

6 Yuval Abraham, “Another Nakba? Israeli Intel Ministry Proposes Expelling Every Palestinian in Gaza to Egypt,” interview by Amy Goodman, *The War and Peace Report*, Democracy Now!, November 3, 2023, video, 17:03-38:30, https://www.democracynow.org/2023/11/3/israel_leak_gaza_expulsion_egypt

7 Abraham Bloch “After not liking Netanyahu’s words: Limor Son Har Melech stunned the Knesset committee,” *Maariv*, May 11, 2025, https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1195594

8 “‘Netanyahu: ‘We will occupy Gaza and our security control will be there forever’,” *Israel Hayom*, May 12, 2025, https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/17945078

9 Lukacs, “Why Canada is one of Israel’s most extreme defenders.”

10 Ibid.

11 Martin Lukacs, “How international law is getting twisted in Gaza,” posted November 9, 2023 by The Breach, video, 3:39, https://breachmedia.ca/israel-international-law-self-defense/

12 International Court of Justice, “Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,” July 19, 2024.

13 Emma Paling and Martin Lukacs, hosts, “How Canadian media distorts the truth about Palestine,” in *The Breach Show*, December 1, 2023, podcast, 30:25, https://breachmedia.ca/how-canadian-media-distorts-the-truth-about-palestine/

14 Ibid.

15 The Canadian Press, “Poll suggests half of Canadians believe Israel is committing genocide in Gaza,“ *CTV News*, June 11, 2025, https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/israel-hamas-war/article/poll-suggests-half-of-canadians-believe-israel-is-committing-genocide-in-gaza/

Part One: Anti-Palestinian Bias

1. Palestinian Deaths Count for Less in Canada's Newspapers. Data Proves It

1 Merlyn Thomas, "Israel Gaza: What Gaza's death toll says about the war," *BBC*, December 20, 2023, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67764664

2 The number of Israelis killed was addressed in the first footnote of the Introduction.

3 The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Gaza: UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people," press release, November 16, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-un-experts-call-international-community-prevent-genocide-against

4 Martin Lukacs, "Why Canada is one of Israel's most extreme defenders," posted November 8, 2023 by *The Breach*, video, 6:07, https://breachmedia.ca/why-canada-supports-israel-colonialism-palestine/

5 Edward S. Herman, and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Pantheon Books, 1988); Emma Paling and Martin Lukacs, hosts, "How Canadian media distorts the truth about Palestine," in *The Breach Show*, December 1, 2023, podcast, 30:25, https://breachmedia.ca/how-canadian-media-distorts-the-truth-about-palestine/

6 Geoffrey York and Mark MacKinnon, "Desperately needed aid for Gaza stuck on Egyptian border as leaders call for corridor to open," *The Globe and Mail*, October 16, 2023, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-desperately-needed-aid-for-gaza-stuck-on-egyptian-border-asleaders/

7 Mona Chalabi (@monachalabi), "Right now, there's an Israeli-imposed media blackout in Palestine, so these numbers matter more than ever. Palestinian journalists have either been murdered (at least 24 so far) or else they're silenced by the disconnection of phone and internet access…," Instagram, October 28, 2023, https://www.instagram.com/p/Cy8iWS-fukzE/?hl=en&img_index=1

8 *The Breach*, Quantifying Canadian media coverage of the war on Gaza, 2023, GitHub, https://github.com/thebreachmedia/gaza-coverage

9 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), "The Gaza Strip: Unrwa Schools Sheltering Displaced People Constantly

Hit," press release, November 19, 2023, https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/gaza-strip-unrwa-schools-sheltering-displaced-people-constantly-hit

10 Tamara Qiblawi et al, "'Not seen since Vietnam': Israel dropped hundreds of 2,000-pound bombs on Gaza, analysis shows," *CNN*, December 22, 2023, https://edition.cnn.com/gaza-israel-big-bombs/index.html

11 Jared Malsin and Nancy A. Youssef, "U.S. Sends Israel 2,000-Pound Bunker Buster Bombs for Gaza War," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 1, 2023, https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/u-s-sends-israel-2-000-poundbunker-buster-bombs-for-gaza-war-82898638; Emma Graham-Harrison et al, "Cratered ground and destroyed lives: piecing together the Jabalia camp airstrike," *The Guardian*, November 1, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/01/jabalia-camp-airstrike-gaza

12 Bethan McKernan and Quique Kierszenbaum, "'We're focused on maximum damage': ground offensive into Gaza seems imminent," *The Guardian*, October 10, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/10/right-now-it-is-one-day-at-a-time-life-on-israels-frontline-with-gaza

13 Yuval Abraham, "'A mass assassination factory': Inside Israel's calculated bombing of Gaza," *+972 Magazine*, November 30, 2023, https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/

14 Lauren Leatherby, "Gaza Civilians, Under Israeli Barrage, Are Being Killed at Historic Pace," *The New York Times*, November 25, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/25/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-death-toll.html

15 Tia Goldenberg, "In horrific killings by Hamas, Israeli trauma over the Holocaust resurfaces," *The Globe and Mail*, October 15, 2023, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-israel-hamas-holocaust-trauma/

16 Marsha Lederman, "The cultural world is being ruptured by the Israel-Hamas war," *The Globe and Mail*, October 26, 2023, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-the-cultural-world-is-being-ruptured-by-the-israel-hamas-war/

17 Mark MacKinnon, and Nathan Vanderklippe, "Since start of war, more than 1,700 Palestinians in the West Bank have disappeared into Israeli custody, officials say," *The Globe and Mail*, October 30, 2023, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-since-start-of-war-more-than-1700-palestinians-in-the-west-bank-have/

18 Mustafa Barghouti (@MustafaBarghou1), "The new born Adi Abu mohsen was only one day old when he was killed in #Gaza by #Israeli air strikes. His death certificate was issued before his birth certificate was. #Gaza_Genicide," X, October 29, 2023, https://x.com/MustafaBarghou1/status/1718718693130084395

19 "Israel-Hamas war updates: Here's what happened on Oct. 23," *The Globe and Mail*, October 23, 2023, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-israel-hamas-war-updates-october-oct-23/

20 Human Rights Watch, “Gaza: Communications Blackout Imminent Due to Fuel Shortage,” news release, November 15, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/15/gaza-communications-blackout-imminent-due-fuel-shortage

21 Emma Paling and Katia Lo Innes, “CTV reports on Gaza with anti-Palestinian double standard, data shows,” *The Breach*, November 11, 2023, https://breachmedia.ca/canadian-media-ctv-racist-double-standards-palestinians/

22 Moustafa Bayoumi, “In America’s news headlines, Palestinians die mysterious deaths,” *The Guardian*, May 16, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/16/israel-palestine-us-news-headlines-mysterious-deaths

2. CBC Says Killing of Palestinians Doesn’t Merit Terms ‘Murderous,’ ‘Brutal’

1 “Israel-Gaza war coverage,” *The Guardian*, January 5, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2024/jan/05/middle-east-crisis-live-updates-antony-blinken-israel-palestine-gaza-hamas

2 “Topic: Middle East Crisis,” *CBC News*, https://www.cbc.ca/news/topic/Tag/Middle%20East%20crisis

3 Emma Paling, “CBC featured more Israelis even as Palestinian casualties rose, data shows,” *The Breach*, December 14, 2023, https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-the-national-more-israelis-than-palestinians-gaza/;

4 Briar Stewart, “As Gaza ground invasion looms, mediators try to free more than 100 hostages,” *CBC*, October 13, 2023, https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/israel-gaza-war-hostages-negotiations-1.6995008; Adrienne Arsenault, correspondent, “How week 1 of the Israel-Hamas war unfolded,” *CBC News*, October 2023, 27:50, https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.6996292; Adrienne Arsenault, host, *The National*, “Atrocities in Israel, Gaza crisis, Greenbelt investigation,” *CBC News*, October 11, 2023, 45:28, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0txo8wXdBZI; Terence McKenna, host, *The Breakdown*, “Why Israel hasn’t been able to destroy Hamas,” *CBC News*, October 23, 2023, 8:59, https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.7005895

5 Paling, “CBC featured more Israelis even as Palestinian casualties rose, data shows.”

6 The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Gaza: UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people.”

7 Devi Sridhar, “It’s not just bullets and bombs. I have never seen health organisations as worried as they are about disease in Gaza,” *The Guardian*, December 29, 2023,

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/29/health-organisations-disease-gaza-population-outbreaks-conflict

8 Paling and Lo Innes, “CTV reports on Gaza with anti-Palestinian double standard, data shows.”

9 Martin Lukacs, Katia Lo Innes and Ben Cuthbert, “Palestinian deaths count for less in Canada’s newspapers. Data proves it,” *The Breach*, December 22, 2023, https://breachmedia.ca/palestinian-deaths-canadian-newspapers-data/

10 Voices of Palestine, https://voicesofpalestine.ca/; Human Rights Watch, “Israel/Occupied Territories: Jenin War Crimes Investigation Needed,” news release, May 2, 2002, https://www.hrw.org/news/2002/05/02/israel/occupied-territories-jenin-war-crimes-investigation-needed

11 “Israel’s Occupation: 50 Years of Dispossession,” Campaigns, Amnesty International, posted June 7, 2017, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/06/israel-occupation-50-years-of-dispossession/

3. Canadian Newsrooms Are Stifling Palestinian Perspectives

1 Scott Detrow, host, *All Things Considered*, “Israel and Hamas complete third prisoner-hostage exchange,” NPR, November 26, 2023, podcast, 3:58, https://www.npr.org/2023/11/26/1215298016/israel-and-hamas-complete-third-prisoner-hostage-exchange

2 The Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, *Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations*.

3 Canadaland Union (@CanadalandUnion), “A statement on behalf of the Canadaland Union as well as a number of our non-unionized colleagues,” X, December 14, 2023, https://x.com/CanadalandUnion/status/1735381342550921360?s=20

4 A.J. Christopher, “‘Divide and Rule’: The Impress of British Separation Policies,” *The Royal Geographical Society* 20, no. 3 (1998): 233-240, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20002624

5 Tamar Pileggi, “New deputy defense minister called Palestinians ‘animals’,” *The Times of Israel*, May 11, 2015, https://www.timesofisrael.com/new-deputy-defense-minister-called-palestinians-animals/

6 Davide Mastracci (@DavideMastracci), “The National Post is the flagship publication of Canada’s largest newspaper chain. It has had several front pages focusing on Israelis and Palestinians since October 8. Here are some…,” X, November 2, 2023, https://x.com/DavideMastracci/status/1720086746543915343?s=20

7 Davide Mastracci (@DavideMastracci), Meanwhile, here’s how they’ve depicted Palestinians and other Arabs,” X, November 2, 2023,

https://x.com/DavideMastracci/status/1720086769641906188?s=20

8 Paling, “CTV forbids use of ‘Palestine,’ suppresses critical stories about Israel.”

9 Muhannad Ayyash (@AyyashMohannad), “I kid you fucking not. A reporter from the CBC, just 5 minutes ago, asked me if I can speak with her about “why doesn’t Gaza have an airport?” I kid you fucking not. Again, DO NOT consume Canadian media,” X, October 27, 2023, https://x.com/AyyashMohannad/status/1718002757205197268

10 Al Jazeera English (@AJEnglish), “It was incredibly ironic to see that the discussion about disinformation and censorship would become itself an act of censorship and disinformation. Academic Adel Iskandar speaks to Al Jazeera about his cancelled interview with Canadian state broadcaster CBC,” X, October 26, 2023, https://x.com/ajenglish/status/1717503841745465732?s=46&t=b3obzQKHK0QT5sNpTGBIuA

11 Josef Federman and Jack Jeffrey, “Israeli cabinet approves ceasefire with Hamas that includes release of hostages,” *Global News*, November 21, 2023, https://globalnews.ca/news/10107158/israel-hostage-release-deal-hamas/

12 Benjamin Q. Huynh, Elizabeth T. Chin and Paul B Spiegel, “No evidence of inflated mortality reporting from the Gaza Ministry of Health,” *The Lancet* 403, no. 10421 (2024): 23-24, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02713-7/fulltext

13 Dale Smith, “Rosemary Barton is the Hero We Deserve,” *CanadaLand*, June 25, 2015, https://www.canadaland.com/rosemary-barton-hero-we-deserve/; Rosemary Barton, host, “Netanyahu lost the trust of the people on Oct. 7, former Israeli PM says,” *Power & Politics*, posted October 22, 2023 by *CBC News*, YouTube, 9:45, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSvRbedQ1os

14 International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), “IFJ publishes 32nd annual report on journalists and media staff killed in 2022,” press release, February 7, 2023, https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/end-impunity-2022/article/ifj-publishes-32nd-annual-report-on-journalists-and-media-staff-killed-in-2022

15 “Israeli air raid kills Palestinian journalist and family in Gaza,” *Al Jazeera*, November 3, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/3/israeli-air-raid-kills-palestinian-journalist-10-family-members-in-gaza

16 Al Jazeera English (@AJEnglish), “‘We are waiting for our turn, one after the other.’ A Palestinian journalist from Gaza ripped off his protective gear during a live report after one of his colleagues was killed in an Israeli attack,” X, November 3, 2023, https://x.com/AJEnglish/status/1720417160647016679

17 Committee to Protect Journalists (@pressfreedom), “Over the past three weeks, CPJ has documented the deadliest period for journalists covering conflict since CPJ began tracking in 1992. From October 7 to October 27, 2023, at least 29 journalists were

among more than 8,000 dead on both sides since the war began," X, October 27, 2023, https://x.com/pressfreedom/status/1717993489344922046?s=20

18 Sarah Al-Arshani, "Press freedom advocates are slamming Trump for glorifying violence against reporters," *Business Insider*, September 24, 2020, https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-glorifying-violence-against-news-reporters-is-dangerous-advocates-say-2020-9; Pete Cobus, "Trump Attacks on Press Effective, New Study Finds," *Voice of America*, April 17, 2020, https://www.voanews.com/a/press-freedom_trump-attacks-press-effective-new-study-finds/6187774.html; Chris Cillizza, "Donald Trump just issued a direct threat to the free and independent media," *CNN*, October 12, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/11/politics/donald-trump-media-tweet/index.html

19 Chris McGreal, "Israeli military accused of targeting journalists and their families in Gaza," *The Guardian*, December 21, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/21/israel-idf-accused-targeting-journalists-gaza

20 Open letter: Journalists in Canada condemn Israel's continued killing of journalists in Gaza, https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_xGOUIWLOXRB-mEq76NmnYs_T5ton9kBW6C5EtJE03sk/viewform?edit_requested=true.

4. Globe and Mail Censored Criticism of Israel by Award-Winning Indian Author

1 "2024 Winner - Pankaj Mishra," Weston International Award, https://westoninternationalaward.com/2024-award/

2 Prankaj Mishra, "The Shoah after Gaza," *London Review of Books*, March 21, 2024, https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n06/pankaj-mishra/the-shoah-after-gaza

3 Kunal Chaudhary, "Canada has ignored India's targeting of Sikh activists for too long," *The Breach*, September 22, 2023, https://breachmedia.ca/sikh-activist-assassination-india-canada-foreign-interference/

Part Two: The Fight Inside Newsrooms

5. CBC Has Whitewashed Israel's Crimes in Gaza. I Saw It Firsthand

1 The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Gaza: UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people"; Mohsen al Attar, "Public Statement: Scholars Warn of Potential Genocide in Gaza," OpinioJuris, October 18, 2023, https://opiniojuris.org/2023/10/18/public-statement-scholars-warn-of-potential-genocide-in-gaza/; Raz Segel, "A Textbook Case of Genocide," *Jewish Currents*, October 13, 2023, https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide

2 David Cochrane, host, "Ukraine calls for war crimes tribunal," *Power & Politics*, posted March 13, 2023, by *CBC News*, YouTube, 8:49, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nEfVG6Im6U; Vassy Kapelos, host, "'I don't think there can be a serious question': Allan Rock," *Power & Politics*, posted March 9 2021, by *CBC News*, 9:10, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaeLTuEMXfE

3 Aloysius Wong, "Forever Temporary," *The Review of Journalism*, April 25, 2023, https://reviewofjournalism.ca/cbc-forever-temporary/

4 Human Rights Watch, *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*, April 2021, https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution; Linah Alsaafin, "What is happening in occupied East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah?," *Al Jazeera*, May 1, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/1/what-is-happening-in-occupied-east-jerusalems-sheikh-jarrah; "CPJ calls on FBI to release timeline for conclusion of Shireen Abu Akleh investigation," Committee to Protect Journalists, May 10, 2024, https://cpj.org/2024/05/cpj-calls-on-fbi-to-release-timeline-for-conclusion-of-shireen-abu-akleh-investigation/; Bethan McKernan, "Thousands of Palestinians flee Jenin refugee camp after major Israeli raid," *The Guardian*, July 4, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/04/jenin-refugee-camp-west-bank-israel-military-operation

5 Emanuel Fabian, "Defense minister announces 'complete siege' of Gaza: No power, food or fuel," *The Times of Israel*, October 9, 2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-completesiege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/

6 Sara Jabakhanji, “Toronto-area man with 13 relatives killed in Gaza clings to hope as mother trapped at Rafah crossing, *CBC News*, October 18, 2023, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/mississauga-man-family-in-gaza-hospital-bombing-1.7000384

7 Hammam Farah, “Toronto man says relative was killed in airstrike that hit Gaza church,” interview by David Cochrane, *Power & Politics*, October 25, 2023, by *CBC News*, YouTube, 11:17, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeuoFvMBq3E

8 Bethan McKernan and Sufian Taha, “Gaza civilians afraid to leave home after bombing of ‘safe routes’,” *The Guardian*, October 15, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/14/gaza-civilians-afraid-to-leavehome-after-bombing-of-safe-routes

9 Leatherby, “Gaza Civilians, Under Israeli Barrage, Are Being Killed at Historic Pace.”

10 International Court Of Justice, Application Of The Convention On The Prevention And Punishment Of The Crime Of Genocide In The Gaza Strip (South Africa V. Israel), January 26, 2024, https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203447#:~:text=It%20refers%20to%20the%20rights,and%20conspiracy%20to%20commit%20genocide.

11 “The Human Cost of the War in Iraq,” Massachusetts Institute of Technology, https://web.mit.edu/iraqmortality/

12 Robert Walker, “CBC Radio Guest Falsely Accuses Israel Of Moving Toward Genocide In Gaza,” Honest Reporting Canada, November 6, 2023, https://honestreporting.ca/petitions/cbc-radio-guest-falsely-accuses-israel-of-moving-toward-genocide-in-gaza/

13 Mike Fegelman, “UPDATE: Journalist Who Said Israel “Cannot Exist” No Longer With CTV News Atlantic,” Honest Reporting Canada, October 25, 2023, https://honestreporting.ca/petitions/ctv-news-atlantic-journalist-says-israel-cannot-exist/?ref=readthemaple.com; Zahraa Al-Akhrass, “Fighting for fair coverage of Palestine,” *Briarpatch*, April 10, 2024, https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/fighting-for-fair-coverage-of-palestine

14 Paling, “CBC featured more Israelis even as Palestinian casualties rose, data shows.”

15 Paling, “CBC says killing of Palestinians doesn’t merit terms ‘murderous,’ ‘brutal’.”

16 Manisha Krishnan, “CBC Journalists Told They Can’t Cover Israel-Palestine After Demanding Fairer Coverage,” *Vice*, May 21, 2021, https://www.vice.com/en/article/cbc-journalists-told-they-cant-cover-israel-palestine-after-demanding-fairer-coverage/

17 Davide Mastracci, “Meet The Billionaire-Funded Pro-Israel Group Influencing Media,” *The Maple*, January 29, 2024, https://www.readthemaple.com/meet-the-billionaire-funded-pro-israel-group-influencing-media/

18 Mike Fegelman, HonestReporting Canada newsletter citing 'Impact Report,' October 2023, https://us18.campaign-archive.com/?u=15f5d-413417cf907bd7699c23&id=33fcc23d54&

6. Fighting for Fair Coverage of Palestine

1 "Gaza health ministry releases detailed list of nearly 7,000 Palestinians killed, following US accusations," *The New Arab*, October 27, 2023, https://www.newarab.com/news/gaza-health-ministry-releases-detailed-list-7000-victims

2 Ilan Ben Zion and Joseph Krauss, "Hamas fires rockets at Jerusalem after clashes at mosque injure over 205 Palestinians," *Global News*, May 10, 2021, https://globalnews.ca/news/7847879/palestinians-jerusalem-holy-site-clash/

3 An open letter to Canadian newsrooms on covering Israel-Palestine, May 14, 2021, https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_xGOUIWLOXRB-mEq76NmnYs_T5ton9kBW6C5EtJE03sk/viewform?edit_requested=true.

4 Krishnan, "CBC Journalists Told They Can't Cover Israel-Palestine After Demanding Fairer Coverage."

5 Mike Fegelman, "Global News Journalist Claims Israel 'Targets (Palestinian) Civilians' and 'Kills Kids'," Honest Reporting Canada, May 20, 2021, https://honestreporting.ca/global-news-journalist-claims-israel-targets-palestinian-civilians-and-kills-kids/

6 Dan Williams, et al, "Veteran Al Jazeera journalist shot dead during Israeli raid in West Bank," *Global News*, video, May 11, 2022, 2:25, https://global-news.ca/news/8826542/al-jazeera-journalist-shireen-abu-akleh-killed/

7 United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel*, September 5, 2023, https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/N2326071.pdf

8 "Journalistic Principles and Practices," Global News, https://globalnews.ca/pages/principles-practices/

9 Lukacs, Lo Innes and Cuthbert, "Palestinian deaths count for less in Canada's newspapers. Data proves it."

10 Paling, "CBC says killing of Palestinians doesn't merit terms 'murderous,' 'brutal'."

7. Why I Left CTV News: The Fight for Press Freedom in Canada

1 Mike Fegelman, HonestReporting Canada, “CTV Montreal’s Intersectionality Smear Against Israel,” posted November 28, 2021, https://honestreporting.ca/ctv-montreals-intersectionality-smear-against-israel/

2 Pacinthe Mattar, “The Palestine exception in Canadian media,” interview by Peter Larson, Ottawa Forum on Israel Palestine, October 11, 2024, https://canadatalksisraelpalestine.ca/2024/10/11/the-palestine-exception-why-is-canadian-media-so-worried-about-presenting-a-palestinian-point-of-view-asks-former-cbc-journalist-pacinthe-mattar/; Rahaf Farawi, “CBC’s Palestine Exception,” *Review of Journalism*, June 15, 2022, https://reviewofjournalism.ca/cbcs-palestine-exception/; Nahla Abdo, “The Palestine Exception, Racialization and Invisibilization: From Israel (Palestine) to North America (Turtle Island),” *Critical Sociology*, 49, no. 6 (2023): 967-989, https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205221131315

3 Emma Paling, “CTV forbids use of ‘Palestine,’ suppresses critical stories about Israel,” *The Breach*, November 22, 2023, https://breachmedia.ca/ctv-bell-media-forbids-palestine-suppresses-criticism-israel/; Molly Schumann, “CBC has whitewashed Israel’s crimes in Gaza. I saw it firsthand,” *The Breach*, May 16, 2023, https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-whitewashed-israels-crimes-gaza-firsthand/

4 Sophie M. Lavoie, “If I’m staying silent, I’m being complicit,’ says fired Palestinian-Canadian journalist,” *NB Media Co-op*, October 4, 2024, https://nbmediacoop.org/2024/10/04/if-im-staying-silent-im-being-complicit-says-fired-palestinian-canadian-journalist-video/

5 Just Peace Advocates, “CRA asked to investigate HonestReporting Canada.”

6 “Media Corrections,” HonestReporting Canada, https://honestreporting.ca/corrections-clarifications

7 Mastracci, “Meet The Billionaire-Funded Pro-Israel Group Influencing Media.”

8 Amy Ross Arguedas et al, *News for the powerful and privileged: how misrepresentation and underrepresentation of disadvantaged communities undermine their trust in news* (Oxford, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, April 2023), https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news-powerful-and-privileged-how-misrepresentation-and-underrepresentation-disadvantaged

9 Colette Brin and Sébastien Charlton, “Canada” in *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024*, Nic Newman et al (Oxford, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2024), https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024/canada

8. Covering Palestine Shouldn’t Cost Anyone Their Job. Or Their Life.

1 “Israel-Gaza war takes record toll on journalists,” Committee to Protect Journalists, posted December 21, 2023, https://cpj.org/2023/12/israel-gazawar-takes-record-toll-on-journalists/

2 Committee to Protect Journalists, “Israel-Gaza war.”

3 Nazih Fares (@nazihfares), “There we go. Transcribed with English subtitles based on the Hebrew dialogue. Arab affairs correspondent at Israeli News 13 Zvi Yehezkeli clearly says that the target meant in this attack was the Al-Jazeera reporter’s family! But Israel “doesn’t” target Palestinian civilians,” X, October 26, 2023, https://x.com/nazihfares/status/1717516045538218477

4 Agence France-Presse, “Israel social security data reveals true picture of Oct 7 deaths,” *France 24*, December 15, 2023, https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231215-israel-social-security-data-reveals-true-picture-ofoct-7-deaths

5 Mark Landler, “‘Erase Gaza’: War Unleashes Incendiary Rhetoric in Israel,” *The New York Times*, November 15, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-war-rhetoric.html

6 Edith M. Lederer, “UN humanitarian chief calls Gaza ‘uninhabitable’ three months into Israel-Hamas war,” *Toronto Star*, January 5, 2024, https://www.thestar.com/news/world/un-humanitarian-chief-calls-gaza-uninhabitable-three-months-into-israel-hamas-war/article_e774ecb0-9caf-5fa0-ba3d-a8cf82f2bd3a.html

7 Emma Graham-Harrison, “Gaza death toll passes 22,000 as Israel steps up war against Hamas,” *The Guardian*, January 2, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/02/gaza-death-toll-passes-22000-as-israel-steps-up-war-against-hamas

8 “Over 10,000 infants and children killed in Israel’s Gaza genocide, hundreds of whom are trapped beneath debris,” Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, posted December 9, 2023, https://euromedmonitor.org/a/6020

9 Anna Gordon, “Al Jazeera Journalist Whose Family Was Killed in Airstrike Loses Another Son,” *Time*, January 8, 2024, https://time.com/6553226/aljazeera-journalist-son-killed-airstrike-al-dahdouh/

10 International Federation of Journalists, “Palestine: 2023 was the darkest year for Palestinian journalists, shows PJS report,” press release, January 8, 2024, https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/palestine-2023-was-the-darkest-year-for-palestinian-journalists-shows-pjs-report

11 CBC Radio, “From Roméo Dallaire to Nardwuar, Canadians Pay Tribute to CBC’s Carol Off,” *CBC*, February 28, 2022, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/carol-off-canadians-pay-tribute-1.6363149

12 Anda Zeng, “Token Effort,” *Review of Journalism*, April 6, 2016, https://rrj.ca/token-effort/

13 Padraig Moran, “‘I know the Yazidis are going through hell’: ISIS survivors in Canada plead for help for family left behind,” *CBC Radio*, June 20, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-june-20-2018-1.4713749/i-know-the-yazidis-are-going-through-hell-isis-survivors-in-canada-plead-for-help-for-family-left-behind-1.4713858

14 CBC Radio, “Why ‘love is medicine’ for Indigenous youth,” *CBC News*, March 1, 2017, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-march-1-2017-toronto-mmiw-public-forum-1.4003065/why-love-is-medicine-for-indigenous-youth-1.4003273

15 CBC Radio, “‘I’m Freddie Gray. He’s Freddie Gray. We’re all Freddie Gray’,” *CBC News*, May 14, 2015, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-may-14-2015-1.3073887/i-m-freddie-gray-he-s-freddiegray-we-re-all-freddie-gray-1.3074024; CBC Radio, “Police shootings of unarmed black men are a Canadian problem too, says author” *CBC News*, March 23, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-formarch-23-2018-1.4589415/police-shootings-of-unarmed-black-men-are-a-canadian-problem-too-says-author-1.4589507

16 “CBC Radio One shows, podcasts take home 23 awards at the New York Festivals,” *CBC Radio*, June 19, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/cbc-radio-one-shows-podcasts-take-home-23-awards-at-the-new-york-festivals-1.4712548

17 Pacinthe Mattar, “Objectivity Is a Privilege Afforded to White Journalists,” *The Walrus*, August 21, 2020, https://thewalrus.ca/objectivity-is-a-privilege-afforded-to-white-journalists/

18 “Maria Ressa,” Nieman’s 85th Anniversary Reunion Weekend - Speaker Bios, Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard, https://nieman.harvard.edu/85th-anniversary-reunion-weekend/85th-speaker-bios/#ressa

19 “Hamza Son of Al Jazeera’s Gaza Bureau Chief Killed in Air Strike,” *News9*, video, posted January 8, 2024, YouTube, 2:38, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUxEASbcBLA

20 “Family of Al Jazeera Gaza bureau chief killed in Israeli air raid,” *Al Jazeera*, October 25, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/25/family-ofal-jazeera-gaza-bureau-head-killed-in-israeli-air-raid

21 “Al Jazeera says journalist killed in Israeli strike on Khan Younis,” *The Times of Israel*, December 16, 2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/al-jazeerasays-journalist-killed-in-israeli-strike-on-khan-younis/

22 Shaimaa Khalil, “Al Jazeera bureau chief’s son Hamza al-Dahdouh among journalists killed in Gaza,” *BBC*, January 8, 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67905566

23 Public Statement: Scholars Warn of Potential Genocide in Gaza, October 15, 2023, https://twailr.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Gaza-public-statement-and-signatories.pdf

9. An Open Letter to Canadian Newsrooms on Covering Israel-Palestine

1 Virginia Pietromarchi, Mersiha Gadzo and Ted Regencia, "Several children killed as Israel pounds Gaza refugee camp: Live," *Al Jazeera*, May 14, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/14/israels-bombardment-of-gaza-continues-live

2 General Assembly, Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, United Nations, "Israel's Planned Annexation of Occupied Territory Threatens Two-State Solution, Palestinian Rights Committee Warns, Urges Global Community to Counter Threat," press release, May 5, 2020, https://press.un.org/en/2020/gapal1432.doc.htm

3 "Israel engaged in ethnic cleansing: UN investigator," *Reuters*, March 21, 2011, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-un-cleansing-idUSTRE72K-5CY20110321/; Human Rights Watch (HRW), *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*.

4 Marion Kawas, "CBC still reviewing why it deleted the word 'Palestine'," *Mondoweiss*, January 8, 2021, https://mondoweiss.net/2021/01/cbc-still-reviewing-why-it-deleted-the-word-palestine/

5 Pacinthe Mattar, "Objectivity Is a Privilege Afforded to White Journalists."

6 Andrew Mitrovica, "Canada's blackout of Israel's crimes against humanity," *Al Jazeera*, May 6, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/opinions/2021/5/6/canadas-blackout-of-israels-crimes-against-humanity.; Human Rights Watch, *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*.

7 "Apartheid," B'Tselem, effective January 12, 2021, https://www.btselem.org/apartheid

Part Three: Silencing Palestinian Narratives

11. Why the Term ‘Anti-Palestinian Racism’ Has an Uphill Climb to Recognition

1 Shree Paradkar, “Why the definition of antisemitism has become such a polarizing issue,” *Toronto Star*, November 18, 2022, https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/why-the-definition-of-antisemitism-has-become-such-a-polarizing-issue/article_97b92998-2ada-590d-9925-545b7528f5db.html; “Defining antisemitism: Why anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism,” World Jewish Congress, https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/anti-zionism

2 Tyler Katzenberger, “‘Antisemitic, and un-American’: Biden condemns violence outside LA synagogue,” *Politico*, June 24, 2024, https://www.politico.com/news/2024/06/24/biden-los-angeles-synagogue-protest-violence-00164669; Vanessa Balintec, “Arrests made at protest outside Toronto-area synagogue hosting event marketing occupied West Bank land,” *CBC News*, March 7, 2024, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/thornhill-israeli-real-estate-event-protest-1.7137131

3 “BDS Israel boycott group is anti-Semitic, says US,” *BBC*, November 19, 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-54999010

4 Kristin Rushowy, “Three MPPs leave legislative chamber; Speaker loosens kaffiyeh ban in other parts of Queen’s Park,” *Toronto Star*, May 6, 2024, https://www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/three-mpps-leave-legislativechamber-speaker-loosens-kaffiyeh-ban-in-other-parts-of-queens-park/article_34d12ae6-0bbf-11ef-80bf-37fe149a35fd.html

5 David Kattenberg, “Palestine deleted,” *Mondoweiss*, August 24, 2020, https://mondoweiss.net/2020/08/palestine-deleted/

6 Shree Paradkar, “A chill has crept into Ontario’s health sector when it comes to criticizing Israel’s actions in Gaza,” *Toronto Star*, November 24, 2023, https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/a-chill-hascrept-into-ontario-s-health-sector-when-it-comes-to-criticizing-israel/article_55d03366-ad8a-5f89-8e2c-0c9411a98192.html

7 Shree Paradkar, “‘All of us are very afraid’: TDSB staffers describe culture of fear after board suspends a student equity adviser who shared resources on Palestinian human rights,” *Toronto Star*, June 23, 2021, https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/all-of-us-are-very-afraid-tdsb-staffers-describe-culture-of-fear-after-board-

suspends/article_c304093e-d1a7-5c5c-a032-f513afc240b6.html; Isabel Teotonio, "TDSB adopts strategy to combat anti-Palestinian racism, seeks to address concerns by Jewish groups," *Toronto Star*, June 20, 2024, https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/tdsb-adopts-strategy-to-combat-anti-palestinian-racism-seeks-toaddress-concerns-by-jewish-groups/article_2a25b37e-2f22-11ef-b8f3-c745ca267bca.html

8 "Palestinians 'an invention' of past century: Israel's Smotrich," *Al Jazeera*, March 20, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/20/palestinians-an-invention-of-past-century-israel-smotrich; Dvorah (@Dovorah-Dovorah1), "Brilliant post from @HananyaNaftali telegram page. There are no Palestinians. There are Tribes. It's all about the tribes. The tribes would kill each other if they didn't agree to kill Israelis first," X, June 21, 2024, https://x.com/DovorahDovorah1/status/1804208450861183165; Madison Swart (@swartmadison), "zionist shouts 'there are no palestinians! they don't exist!' in response to a pro-palestinian protest that countered the israel parade in NYC!," X, June 3, 2024, https://x.com/swartmadison/status/1797820754127688147

9 The Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, *Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations*, April 25, 2022, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61db30d12e169a5c45950345/t/627dcf83fa17ad41ff217964/1652412292220/Anti-Palestinian+Racism-+Naming%2C+Framing+and+Manifestations.pdf

10 Shree Paradkar, "External review exonerates U of T in faculty hiring fiasco, but exposes what critic calls a 'gold mine of impropriety'," *Toronto Star*, March 31, 2021, https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/external-review-exonerates-u-of-t-in-faculty-hiring-fiasco-but-exposes-what-critic-calls/article_8447cdac-3760-5cc5-bcb3-c2b290f3bee4.html; Shree Paradkar, "Search for new director of U of T law faculty's International Human Rights Program leads to resignations, allegations of interference," *Toronto Star*, September 17, 2020, https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/search-for-new-director-of-u-of-t-law-faculty-s-international-humanrights-program/article_92636adb-5996-5db5-a288-fc117eb7aea4.html

12. What Happened Outside Mount Sinai Hospital as a Pro-Palestine Rally Passed By?

1 "About Sinai Health," Sinai Health, https://www.sinaihealth.ca/about-sinaihealth

2 Mayor Olivia Chow (@MayorOliviaChow), "Read my statement on events outside Mount Sinai Hospital yesterday," X, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/MayorOliviaChow/status/1757488213763961120; Justin Trudeau (@JustinTrudeau), "The demonstration at Mount Sinai Hospital yesterday was reprehensible. Hospitals are places for treatment and care, not protests and

intimidation," X, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/JustinTrudeau/status/1757461988588794301

3 David Jacobs (@DrJacobsRad), "This is Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, Canada. The hospital was established because Jewish doctors had no place to train or work due to anti-semitism. Tonight a crowd is chanting for violence against Jews outside this place of healing," X, February 12, 2024, https://x.com/DrJacobsRad/status/1757235725282550245

4 Daoud Kuttab, "Reality check — intifada has nothing to do with genocide of Jews," *LA Times*, December 12, 2023, https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2023-12-12/antisemitism-elise-stefanik-genocide-intifada-college-presidents

5 Michael Levitt (@LevittMichael), "Tonight, the anti-Israel mob decided to pay a visit to Mount Sinai Hospital. I wonder who they were targeting? The patients, or the families there to comfort them? The nurses, docs or first responders saving lives? Or maybe just the Jews, because Mount Sinai Hospital, right?" X, February 12, 2024, https://x.com/LevittMichael/status/1757244454094741890

6 Raghu Venugopal MD (@raghu_venugopal), "So, it's a disappointing evening in front Mount Sinai Hospital…," [live broadcast], X, February 12, 2024, https://x.com/i/broadcasts/1RDGllwyEoMGL

7 David Jacobs (@DrJacobsRad), "Here's a much sharper video from last night's incident at Mount Sinai Hospital. For those claiming that it didn't happen, please stop being ridiculous. It obviously did. The real questions are why was this allowed to happen, and how will it be prevented from happening again?" X, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/DrJacobsRad/status/1757413856828129328; Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (@CanadianFSWC), "Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital was established in the 1920s by Jews against the backdrop of #antisemitism. Last night, it was the target of protesters chanting for violence and terror against Jews," X, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/CanadianFSWC/status/1757432765933392163; CIJA (@CIJAinfo), "We can only hope those anti-Israel protestors choosing to target Mount Sinai hospital in #Toronto never have to use it, never have a family member or loved one in desperate need of help," X, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/CIJAinfo/status/1757433738433048665

8 Marco Mendicino (@marcomendicino), "Targeting Mount Sinai Hospital to incite intifada against Israel and the Jewish people is flagrantly antisemitic and undermines the health and safety of the patients and medical professionals who work there. The torrent of hatred against Jews and Jewish institutions must stop!" X, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/marcomendicino/status/1757385302744699389

9 Deborah Lyons (@DeborahLyonsSE), "We will be calling Toronto's Mayor and Chief of Police today to discuss how they will put a stop to this despicable targeting and attempted intimidation of Mount Sinai Hospital and Jews across Toronto and Canada," X, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/DeborahLyonsSE/status/1757396928382337371

10 Bonnie Crombie (@BonnieCrombie), “I’ve been torn up by the accounts of protestors infiltrating Mount Sinai Hospital, intimidating Jewish patients and doctors, and threatening our already weakened healthcare system…,” X, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/BonnieCrombie/status/1757492668198690917

11 Jews Say No To Genocide (@jewssaynotogenocide), “Why is it that it took Prime Minister Justin Trudeau months to call for a ceasefire while over 30,000 Palestinian civilians were murdered, but only hours to submit to the the Toronto Israel lobby’s pressure to call out bogus antisemitism?” Instagram, February 13, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/jewssaynotogenocide/p/C3TP0Lwvgsy/?img_index=2

12 Independent Jewish Voices (@IndJewishVoices), “Quickly, how was the hospital “targeted,” and what actual damage to Jewish individuals and communities took place? From where we’re standing, this “vile display” looks pretty kosher,” Instagram, February 13, 2024, https://x.com/IndJewishVoices/status/1757480428758299069

13 Toronto 4 Palestine (@Toronto4Palestine), “On February 12th, an emergency action was mobilized to demand action against the ongoing genocide in Rafah by the Zionist state of Israel,” Instagram, February 14, 2024, https://www.instagram.com/toronto4palestine/p/C3V6BmbJ_Go/

13. Attacks on Press Freedoms Have Chilling Effects Far Beyond Gaza

1 Hind Khoudary (@hindkhoudary), Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/hindkhoudary/

2 Nadia Hardman, “Most of Gaza’s Population Remains Displaced and in Harm’s Way,” Human Rights Watch, December 20, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/20/most-gazas-population-remains-displaced-andharms-way

3 The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Gaza: UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people.”

4 United Nations, International Court of Justice, “South Africa institutes proceedings against Israel and requests the International Court of Justice to indicate provisional measures,” press release, December 29, 2023, https://www.un.org/unispal/document/icj-southafrica-israel-genocide-29dec2023/

5 Human Rights Watch, “Israel: Strikes on Journalists in Lebanon Apparently Deliberate,” news release, December 7, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/07/israel-strikes-journalists-lebanon-apparently-deliberate; Reporters Without Borders (RSF), “RSF files complaint with ICC for war crimes against journalists in Palestine and Israel,” news release, November 1, 2023, https://rsf.org/en/rsf-files-complaint-icc-war-crimes-against-journalists-palestine-and-israel; RSF, “RSF video investigation into the death of Reuters reporter Issam Abdallah in Lebanon: the journalists’ vehicle was explicitly targeted,”

press release, October 29, 2023, https://rsf.org/en/rsf-video-investigation-death-reuters-reporter-issam-abdallah-lebanon-journalists-vehicle-was

6 Youmna El Sayed, “The Only Thing Keeping Me Standing Is the Suffering I’m Seeing”: Being a Journalist in Gaza,” *The Nation*, November 21, 2023, https://www.thenation.com/article/world/youmna-el-sayed-gaza-dispatch/

7 An open letter to Canadian newsrooms on covering Israel-Palestine, May 14, 2021.

8 Zahraa Al-Akhrass (@zahraa.alakhrass), “Some personal news: I’m no longer an employee of Global News. I was fired on October 17 for posting about Palestine on my social media. This is not about me, but about us. I feel disappointed that this organization has failed me as a Palestinian…,” Instagram, October 29, 2023 https://www.instagram.com/p/Cy_YCzYLGpc/

9 Anealla Safdar, “As Israel pounds Gaza, BBC journalists accuse broadcaster of bias,” *Al Jazeera*, November 23, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/23/as-israel-pounds-gaza-bbc-journalists-accuse-broadcaster-of-bias

10 Farawi, “CBC’s Palestine Exception.”

11 Paling, “CBC says killing of Palestinians doesn’t merit terms ‘murderous,’ ‘brutal’.”

Part Four: The Pressure Tactics of the Israel Lobby

14. Investigation: Journalists Denounce Pressure from the Pro-Israel Group HonestReporting Canada

1 “Israël - Territoires palestiniens : après le cessez-le-feu, l’incertitude,” UNICEF, posted April 8, 2025, https://www.unicef.fr/article/israel-palestineles-enfants-paient-le-prix-de-la-guerre/#Dans-la-bande-de-Gaza; “Israël et le Hamas accusés de crimes de guerre, par des enquêteurs indépendants de l’ONU,” Nations Unies, posted June 12, 2024, https://news.un.org/fr/story/2024/06/1146336

2 Mike Fegelman, “CTV Montreal’s Intersectionality Smear Against Israel,” Honest Reporting Canada, November 28, 2021, https://honestreporting.ca/ctv-montreals-intersectionality-smear-against-israel/

3 Jack Nagler, “Digesting Gastronationalism,” *CBC News*, March 23, 2022, https://cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/ombudsman/reviews/Digesting_Gastronationalism

4 Nagler, “Digesting Gastronationalism.”

5 Ipsos, *Le Journalisme Face À La Haine En Ligne* (Montréal, Ipsos, 2021), https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2021-11/Ipsos%20-%20Le%20journalisme%20face%20%C3%A0%20la%20haine%20en%20ligne_Presentation%20-%20FR%20FINAL.pdf

6 “Submit incidents of online threats,” Canada Press Freedom Project, https://canadapressfreedom.ca/submit-incidents-of-online-threats/

7 Just Peace Advocates, “CRA asked to investigate HonestReporting Canada,” press release, October 11, 2024, https://www.justpeaceadvocates.ca/cra-asked-to-investigate-honestreporting-canada/

15. Postmedia Called Out for Publishing Israeli Propaganda as ‘News’

1 Josh Nathan-Kazis, “Fledgling Jewish News Service Rocks Boat With Strident Pro-Israel Message,” *The Forward*, June 28, 2013, https://forward.com/israel/179453/fledgling-jewish-news-service-rocks-boat-withstri/?ref=readthemaple.com

2 “Canadian Press Policies,” Our News Principles, The Canadian Press, https://www.thecanadianpress.com/about/our-team-values/our-news-principles/

3 Nidal Al-Mughrabi and Emily Rose, “Israel strikes dense Gaza camp, says it kills Hamas commander,” *Reuters*, October 31, 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-says-it-fires-israeli-troops-pressing-gazaground-assault-2023-10-31/

4 Najib Jobain, Jack Jeffrey, and Lee Keath, “Israeli airstrikes crush apartments in Gaza refugee camp, as ground troops battle Hamas militants,” *Associated Press*, November 1, 2023, https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-hamas-gaza-war-news-10-31-2023-54ab6bd7f-6861be86266770c245827e1

5 Sally Mahood, “Letter to the Editor: Newspapers should reconsider Jewish News Syndicate,” *Regina Leader-Post*, November 21, 2023, https://leaderpost.com/opinion/columnists/letters-saskatchewan-party-gerrymanders-seats-to-favour-rural-voters?; Josef Federman, “Israel reveals signs of Hamas activity at Shifa, but a promised command center remains elusive,” *Associated Press*, November 23, 2023, https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-gaza-shifa-hospitals-a017ba154c816c8d565393917dadd9ee?

6 Jewish News Syndicate, “Israel-Hamas truce in effect as Jewish nation awaits release of Israeli hostages,” *The National Post*, November 24, 2023, https://nationalpost.com/news/world/israel-middle-east/israel-hamas-truce-hostages?; Elena Shao et al, “Freed Palestinians Were Mostly Young and Not Convicted of Crimes,” *The New York Times*, December 1, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/01/world/middleeast/palestinian-prisoners-released-gaza.html?

7 James Winter, “Canada’s Media Monopoly,” Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting, May 1, 2002, https://fair.org/extra/canada8217s-media-monopoly/

8 Ian Austen, “Reuters Asks a Chain to Remove Its Bylines,” *The New York Times*, September 20, 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/20/business/media/reuters-asks-a-chain-to-remove-its-bylines.html?

9 Sean Craig, “You Must Be This Conservative To Ride: The Inside Story of Postmedia’s Right Turn,” *Canadaland*, August 12, 2019, https://www.canadaland.com/the-conservative-transformation-of-postmedia/

16. In ‘Covert Op,’ Israeli Consulate Backed Poll Inflating Support for Gaza War

1 Aurora Strategy Global, *Israel - Hamas Awareness & Attitudes Survey* (Toronto: Aurora Strategy, 2023), https://aurorastrategy.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Aurora_Canada_Israel_Hamas_REPORT.pdf; John Saunders,

"The dirty-tricks man," *The Globe and Mail*, August 7, 1999, https://walnet.org/jane_doe/news/toronto_99/gandm-990807-2.html

2 Aurora Strategy Global, *Israel - Hamas Awareness & Attitudes Survey*; "Public Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements," Canadian Research Insights Council, https://www.canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/standards/por/

3 Consulate of Israel in Toronto (@israelintoronto), "A study conducted by @aurorastrategy showcasing the viewpoints of Canadians regarding Hamas terrorists and their attacks on Israel," Instagram, November 6, 2023, https://www.instagram.com/p/CzUj64ZrSI7/?hl=en.

4 Brennan MacDonald, "Majority of Canadians support a pause in hostilities in Israel-Hamas war, polls suggest," *CBC News*, November 8, 2023, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-polling-israel-hamas-war-cessation-hostilities-1.7022510.

5 "Damning evidence of war crimes as Israeli attacks wipe out entire families in Gaza," News, Amnesty International, posted October 20, 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/damning-evidenceof-war-crimes-as-israeli-attacks-wipe-out-entire-families-in-gaza/; The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Gaza: UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people."

6 Jack Siegal, LinkedIn, https://www.linkedin.com/in/jack-siegel

7 "Mark Resnick," Our Team, McMillan Vantage, https://mcmillanvantage.com/team/mark-resnick/

8 "Jonathan Kalles," Our Team, McMillan Vantage, https://mcmillanvantage.com/team/jonathan-kalles/

9 Raffy Boudjikanian and Darren Major, "More than 30 MPs — including 23 Liberals — call for ceasefire in Israel-Hamas war," *CBC News*, October 23, 2023, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/33-mps-letter-trudeau-ceasefire-israel-gaza-1.7003256#:;

10 Salma Zahid (@SalmaZahid15), "Today I again wrote to @CanadianPM to urge him to call for an immediate cease fire in Gaza to protect innocent civilian lives. With the death of over 15,500 Palestinian civilians, including over 6,600 children, Canada must raise its voice for peace," X, December 5, 2023, https://x.com/SalmaZahid15/status/1732091455693336723?t=8rOLioLAs-zEbKDFdCBqQA&s=19

11 Gideon Levy, "Israeli Propaganda Isn't Fooling Anyone – Except Israelis," *Haaretz*, June 4, 2015, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2015-06-04/ty-article/.premium/propaganda-without-end-amen/0000017f-e136-df7ca5ff-e37ea0de0000

12 Uri Blau, “Inside the Clandestine World of Israel’s ‘BDS-busting’ Ministry,” *Haaretz*, March 26, 2017, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2017-03-26/ty-article-magazine/inside-the-clandestine-world-ofisraels-bds-busting-ministry/0000017f-e160-df7c-a5ff-e37ace710000

13 Itamar Eichner, “Israel vs. boycott movement: From defense to offense,” *Ynet News*, July 12, 2017, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4987758,00.html

14 Adam Entous and Ronan Farrow, “Private Mossad for Hire,” *The New Yorker*, February 11, 2019, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/02/18/private-mossad-for-hire

15 James Bamford, “Why Israel Slept,” *The Nation*, November 2, 2023, https://www.thenation.com/article/world/israel-gaza-intelligence-cyber-shield/; Entous and Farrow, “Private Mossad for Hire.”

16 Amy Spiro, “Public diplomacy minister quits post amid war, citing ‘waste of public funds’,” *The Times of Israel*, October 13, 2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/public-diplomacy-minister-quits-post-amid-war-citingwaste-of-public-funds/

17 Galit Distel Atbaryan (@GalitDistel), “The screening of “The Movie”. The same uncensored film that journalists have already been exposed to. Today it was the turn of the Knesset members. The Knesset doctor stands outside the hall and offers sedatives before watching,” X, November 1, 2023, https://x.com/GalitDistel/status/1719689095230730656

18 Chris McGreal, “Israel: self-proclaimed ‘racist’ politician nominated as New York consul general,” *The Guardian*, April 20, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/20/may-golan-israel-new-york-consular-role

19 Brennan MacDonald, “286K sign e-petition urging Trudeau to demand immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas,” *CBC News*, November 24, 2023, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/petition-ceasefire-hamas-israel-most-signed-1.7039579

20 Lina Dayan and Maya Lecker, “How Haaretz Is Counting Israel’s Dead From the October 7 Hamas Attack,” *Haaretz*, November 23, 2023, https://www.haaretz.com/haaretz-explains/2023-11-23/ty-article-magazine/.premium/how-haaretz-is-counting-israels-dead-from-the-october-7-hamas-attack/0000018b-d42c-d423-affb-f7afe1a70000; Ishaan Tharoor, “The election that led to Hamas taking over Gaza,” *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/24/gaza-election-hamas-2006-palestine-israel/

21 United Nations, “Condemning Violence against Civilians by All Parties, Secretary-General Urges Israel as Occupying Power to Abide by International Humanitarian Law,” press release, June 21, 2023, https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21854.doc.htm.; Ari Shavit, “Top PM Aide: Gaza Plan Aims to Freeze the Peace Process,” *Haaretz*, October

6, 2004, https://www.haaretz.com/2004-10-06/ty-article/top-pm-aide-gaza-plan-aims-tofreeze-the-peace-process/0000017f-e56c-dea7-adff-f5ff1fc40000

22 Suzanne Goldenberg, “US plotted to overthrow Hamas after election victory,” *The Guardian*, March 4, 2008, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/04/usa.israelandthepalestinians

23 Saunders, “The dirty-tricks man.”

24 John Barber, “Brand new slime, same old smell,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 13, 2006, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/brand-new-slime-same-old-smell/article731731/

25 Marcel Wieder, “A tough but accurate assessment of the situation Israel is dealing with in Gaza. Many people will say this is harsh, uncaring, and extreme. It is not. It is reality. This is a war that Israel must win or there will be no Israel. Israelis understand this, but unfortunately the rest of the world does not,” LinkedIn, October 17, 2023, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/marcelwieder_a-tough-but-accurate-assessment-of-the-situation-activity-7120010619868631040-VtH_/

26 “Lying is never a good strategy in politics” – Marcel Weider,” *Milénio Stadium*, September 29, 2023, https://mileniostadium.com/temas-de-capa/lying-is-never-a-good-strategy-in-politics-marcel-weider/

Part Five: Voices from Palestine

17. Report from the Frontline of Israel's War of Annihilation

1 "Hossam Shabat," Committee to Protect Journalists, https://cpj.org/data/people/hossam-shabat/

2 Hossam Shabat, "Death march from Beit Lahia," trans. Sharif Abdel Kouddous, *Drop Site News*, December 5, 2024, https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/death-march-from-beit-lahia

3 Hossam Shabat, "In Gaza, a moment where death and the ceasefire intersect," trans. Sharif Abdel Kouddous, *Drop Site News*, January 18, 2025, https://www.dropsitenews.com/p/gaza-where-death-and-ceasefire-intersect

4 Hossam Shabat (@HossamShabat), "Finally reunited with my mother after 492 days, I'm finally hugging my mom," X, February 10, 2025, https://x.com/HossamShabat/status/1889170438296662095

5 Suppressed News (@SuppressedNws), "CALL TO ACTION," X, October 23, 2024, https://x.com/SuppressedNws/status/1849134552607809542

Part Six: Advocating for Change

18. Palestine Media Advocacy Toolkit

1 Ahmed Bouzid, *The Media Playbook: A handbook for media activism and criticism on the Middle East conflict* (Palestine Media Watch, 2002).

2 Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights, published April 28, 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/

3 Lorenzo Tondo, "Palestinian Red Crescent details medic's account of 15 colleagues' slaughter," *The Guardian*, June 4, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/04/palestinian-red-crescent-details-medics-account-of-15-colleagues-slaughter.

4 The Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, *Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations*.

5 "10 things to remember when reporting on Palestine," The Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy, https://www.thepipd.com/resources/10-media-guidelines/

6 "Guidance for Reporting on Palestine/Israel," Institute for Middle East Understanding, published December 7, 2023, https://imeu.org/article/guidance-for-reporting-on-palestine-israel

7 International Press Institute, Use With Care: A Reporter's Glossary of Loaded Language in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, https://ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UseWithCare_ebook.pdf

8 "Media Resource Guide: Palestine and Israel," The Arab and Middle Eastern Journalists Association," last updated November, 28, 2023, https://www.ameja.org/Media-Resource-Guide-for-Palestine-Israel

9 Anthony Issa, "Your definitive Palestine Media Toolkit," *The Link*, March 18, 2025, https://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/your-definitive-palestine-media-toolkit. Much of this section was taken from a previously published, condensed version of this toolkit.

10 Amnesty International, *Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians*, February 2022, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/

11 CBC News, "Corrections and clarifications," January 21, 2025, https://www.cbc.ca/news/corrections/statement-cbc-news-network-jan20-1.7100000; "CBC admits to dehumanizing Palestinians on air after CJPME pushback," The Media

Accountability Project, posted January 22, 2025, https://www.cjpmemap.ca/impact_2025_01_22_ai_cbc_news

12 The Canadian Association of Journalists, Ethics Guidelines, November 2023, https://caj.ca/wp-content/uploads/Ethics-Guidelines-v2023.pdf

13 “Canadian Association of Broadcasters’ Code of Ethics (2002),” Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, https://www.cbsc.ca/codes/cab-code-ofethics/

14 “Ethics,” The Canadian Association of Journalists, https://caj.ca/ethics/

15 National NewsMedia Council, https://www.mediacouncil.ca/

16 Conseil de presse du Québec, Quebec Press Council Guide of Journalistic Ethicshttps://conseildepresse.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/QPC_EthicsGuide.pdf

17 Conseil de presse du Québec, Quebec Press Council Guide of Journalistic Ethics

18 “Journalistic Standards and Practices,” *CBC Radio-Canada*, https://cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/vision/governance/journalistic-standards-and-practices

19 “Editorial Code of Conduct,” *The Globe and Mail*, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/about/editorial-code/